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COMPARISON OF THE FAILURE RATE IN THE ENGLISH SUBJECT
AND THE CAUSES FOR THESE FAILURES AMONG STUDENTS OF
THE 11TH GRADE (5TH YEAR) OF THE COMMERCE, LETTERS AND
SCIENCE TRACTS OF THE INSTITUTO URRACÁ. A STUDY
CONDUCTED IN SANTIAGO, VERAGUAS PROVINCE.

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my twin sister, Lenora McCarter Hayes, who has literally been with me all of my life, with whom I have shared the best and worst moments of my childhood and adolescence and with whom I hope to share many more. I love you very much, and hope you are happy and have a wonderful time anywhere you go!

I also dedicate this work to my little brother Julio A. Hernández D., and little sister Patricia G. Hernández D., you two still have a long way to go, and regardless of the age difference between us, I love you both very much and will be around for you whenever you need me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In our day, English has become one of the official languages of the Republic of Panama, due to the fact that so many of the new trends that are affecting not only the country, but the world, have a direct relationship with the English language. One of these trends that is widely spread over the globe is that of globalization, which is a social, political, economic, and cultural phenomenon.

The globalization process is placing more and more pressure on the countries all around the globe, especially on third world countries who find their economy greatly affected by the impositions of those first world nations that have full control over the international markets. Therefore, as the governments of these countries find themselves obligated to incorporate themselves into this process; the population is also expected to move along and adapt to these changes. So, as globalization is incorporated into the philosophy of the educational systems of third world countries, the English language as an important subject becomes a predominant feature.

In the case of Panama, English is an obligatory subject in the educational curricula throughout the isthmus. Until recently, English was only a requirement at the high school level, yet now, with the process of Modernización de la Educación (Modernization of Education), a movement that began in 1997, as part of the internal globalization process of Panama, the English language has now been incorporated as an obligatory subject for the primary school levels as well.

Given the fact that the English subject has been imposed upon Panamanian students, and has become a requirement in the job market, it places a great deal of pressure on them; they feel little encouragement yet more pressure to acquire this language. Most of time, difficulty in learning the English language is observed among the students; and given the fact that it is the responsibility of the teacher to motivate the students to make passing grades, something seems not to be working, and the student find

themselves constantly failing in this subject throughout the school year, and, even more drastically, throughout all their time in high school.

For this reason, it is necessary to find or perhaps come close to a reason for high failure rates in this subject. Many factors, but most importantly, problems relating the teachers' preparation, input, and relationships with the students should be examined, to find a possible solution for the problem of the high failure rates. It is important to identify those factors that are affecting the students' abilities and self-confidence in learning the English language.

JUSTIFICATION

When it comes to business, economics, publicity, politics, and technology, English is an overtly important language for communication. Consequently, most countries, where English is not the native language, have incorporated it as an obligatory subject into the curricula of their educational systems.

In the Republic of Panama, as in many other third world countries, English is an indispensable language. The Panama Canal and the tourism that it has generated, used to be the main reasons for learning the English language; yet, nowadays, Panama is one of the main financial centers of the world; along with the Bahamas, Caiman Islands, Hong Kong, and Switzerland, which makes it crucial for the people who work in this financial system, to know the language, so that they can deal with people of different countries on a global economic basis. The fact that Panama is primarily a commercial country, and its job market is largely based on the service sector, underlines the importance of the ability to communicate in the English language. Needless to say, English is the language of technology, and even though Panama is a third world country, or a country in process of development, technology is being incorporated into all sectors of the Panamanian economy and society including the educational system.

The fact that English is becoming a requirement for employment or, at least, for well paid employment, points out its importance in promoting commerce and industry, including international trade and investment, which requires communication in this language. Thus, the English language is crucial for progress in the professional lives of Panamanians.

The Ministerio de Educación, since 1946, has recognized the importance of incorporating the English language into the school system, even though it was not until the movement of Modernization of Education in 1997, that this governmental institution incorporated this subject as an obligatory requirement at all levels of the school system,

primarily junior and senior high school. Nevertheless, on a daily basis we hear of the problems that the educational authorities are facing with the high rate of failures among students in many subjects which are part of the curricula, one of which is that of interest to us, the English subject.

This research proposes to compare the failure rate in the English subject of students of the 5th level in the Letters, Science and Commerce tracts of the Instituto Urracá secondary school of Santiago, Veraguas Province, in order to make a contribution to identifying the factors that cause students to fail in the English courses, and we will examine those factors which may be classified as teacher, student, or school centered in order to find solutions to the problem.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Failure in general, is a problem hard to cope with for any human being; it creates a feeling of incompetence, impotence, and dissatisfaction. Failure, also causes, in many cases irremediable damage to self-esteem. Up to now, no one has been able to determine with certainty the causes of failure in many of the subjects taught at all levels of school; for the purposes of this study, we will refer to the English subject. Some researchers, however, have come close to determining a more or less accurate percentage of failures in some levels of high school in the Province of Veraguas. Yet, as mentioned before, no concrete reasons for these failures have been identified

As is well known, most high schools throughout the Isthmus are divided into specialization groups or tracts. The most common of these divisions are the areas of science, letters, and commerce; and each of these tracts are divided into subjects that contribute or prepare students in their area of specialization. In the case of the English subject, each tract has a different program in which the topics relevant to the students' specialization are introduced as study themes. Most of the material that is provided in these tracts, differs in content, as well as methodology and techniques used for instruction.

There are many factors, which must be taken into account before making any statements about specific rates of failure among the different tracts, and the reasons for these failures. For one thing, it is very important to determine the preparation of the English teachers of each tract. Most of these teachers are graduates of the English Career Program of the Universidad de Panamá. It is of vital importance to determine how well these teachers were prepared to teach at the high school level, because many of the teachers who have graduated from this program all over the isthmus have not been well prepared to be instructors of the English language at any level. It is hard for a high school student of any tract to master a foreign language if the teachers have not adequately mastered the language that they teach

There are also many other factors that might be reason enough for students to fail the English subject, factors such as the environment in which the English language is taught, the schedule on which the students are taking the subject; the motivation the students have for learning the language, the previous knowledge the students have; their relationship with and feelings towards their teacher; their classmates' influence on the teaching/learning process during the class; and so forth. It is also relevant to focus some attention on the programs of English language instruction provided by the Ministerio de Educación, and how these programs are being implemented. The content, which these programs contain, may also be a factor that could easily influence the rate of failure among students of the different tracts in the English language subject.

We are aware of the fact that there are many failures in the English subject among the students of the different high school tracts, but the problem is that there has actually never been any serious research conducted based on statistical information, and a concrete reason has never been stated. There have been many hypothetical statements made with regard to this situation, most of them blame the economic problems the students' face, family problems, and even problems in the preparation of the educational programs. Therefore, this research will address the following question: What differences are there in the failure rates in the English subject among 5th level (11th grade) students of the Science, Letters and Commerce tracts in the Instituto Urracá, and what are the causes of these failures?

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

The following definitions of key terms have been provided to facilitate the understanding of the reader as to how they have been used within the context of this research. These definitions have been adapted from dictionaries, encyclopedias and professional texts related to the research topic.

- a. **Commerce tract:** This is an area of study, at the high school level, which proposes to prepare students to incorporate themselves into the field of commerce in the university, and related professional careers.
- b. **Failure rate:** Failure is a lack of success. For the purposes of this study, failure rate will be operationalized as the amount or degree of lack of success or inefficient academic performance, in terms of grades, in the English subject. Failing grades average between 1.0 and 2.9.
- c. **High school:** A school that usually includes the 9th through 12th grades. For the purpose of this study, high school will be defined as a school which prepares students in three different areas of specialization: science, letters and commerce; at the 4th, 5th and 6th levels, which are the equivalents to the 10th, 11th and 12th grades. For example, the Instituto Urracá of Santiago, Veraguas Province; the Colegio José Daniel Crespo of Chitré, Herrera Province; the Colegio Manuel María Tejada Roca of Los Santos, Los Santos Province; the Colegio Rodolfo Chiari of Aguadulce, Coclé Province; the Colegio Abel Bravo of Colón, Colón Province; and the Instituto Nacional of Panama City, Panama Province are all high schools.
- d. **Letters tract:** This is an area of study, at the high school level, which proposes to prepare students to incorporate themselves into the fields of humanities in the university, and related professional careers.

- e **Science tract:** This is an area of study, at the high school level, which proposes to prepare students at the high school level, so they may incorporate themselves into the science fields in the university, and related professional careers.

SIGNIFICANCE

The general purpose of this study is to establish the differences in failure rate in the English subject among students of the 5th level of the science, letters and commerce tracts of the Instituto Urracá high school. The causes of the failure rates in this particular subject in each tract will also be determined, for it is important and necessary to understand the root of this problem, so that some kind of measures can be taken to help reduce the number of failing students in the English subject.

Differences in the methodology employed to teach the English subject and the teacher's preparation to teach the subject and attitude towards the task of instruction and the students are also important determinants which will be analyzed for a better understanding of the causes of student failure in this important and obligatory subject.

This research will analyze and compare statistical data related to the number of failures among students of the 5th level of the science, letters, and commerce tracts, and identify causes for these failure rates. Finally, most importantly, this study will make a contribution to the area of ESL curriculum and methodology design, and may serve as a reference for anyone interested in understanding the current problem under study.

The following are general objectives of the research:

- 1 Provide concrete data on the failure rates in the English subject in the Instituto Urracá high school.
- 2 Compare the failure rates of the three programs for English language instruction of the science, letters and commerce tracts as implemented in the Instituto Urracá.
- 3 Provide teacher based data, including preferred instructional methods and techniques, professional preparation and attitude towards teaching and towards students for each of the teachers who are teaching 5th level students in the Instituto Urracá during the academic year 2001.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Failure is an issue of much controversy in every school system around the globe, and so is the causes for failure in the different subjects that students are required to take as part of the curriculum designed by the educational authorities and institutions. But, who is a failing student? How can student failure be predicted? What are the causes of failure?

It is no secret that there have been many hypotheses formulated to explain the problem of failing students, including: lack of motivation; dislike of the subject or the teacher; cultural differences; social and economical disadvantages; and so forth. There are many hypothetical explanations, but which one fits the case of the 5th level students of the three different tracts of the Instituto Urracá high school? Why do they fail the English subject?

Students who fail in a subject not only find themselves delayed in terms of academic progress, but also find themselves suffering serious problems with their self-esteem and other psychological factors which lead to a sense of inadequacy or incompetence. Moreover, the idea of not being good enough, intelligent enough, or competent enough leads to even greater gaps in their lives

This study focuses on failing students from two perspectives; the first, as to why they fail, second, as to what can be done to help them. Moreover, assuming that perhaps motivational factors may be at issue, teachers' input, content and methodology; the following question is addressed. what are the differences in failure rate in the English subject among students of the 5th levels of the science, letters and commerce tracts of the Instituto Urracá high school, and what are the causes of these failures? Consequently, the literature, specifically the ideas and insights in this chapter, are important in enlightening this issue

To begin to understand the basic concern of this work, which involves failing students, we need to have a clear concept of what this involves. Grossbart (1996), in response to an article concerning Flunking Students, states:

“Has anyone ever failed a student that tried to succeed? I do not believe I ever encountered a student who could not “hack it”. But I have encountered a number who chose not to hack it. All the preventive measures that have been suggested by so many researchers are mostly formulated on the basis of a class of 45, and being this the case, it is easier to intervene on a student’s behalf in a class of 45 than in a survey of 150-250. Students are constantly making a cost-benefit analysis of every decision they make-including whether or not they should study, go to an office hour, buy a six pack or the required books, watch a football game or read that book, etc. Some are content to just get by with Cs and sometimes they miscalculate and fail a course. We have an obligation to use the most effective pedagogical methods at our disposal to avoid these students failing.”

Could failing be a simple phase? According to Robertson (2000), many teens experience a time when keeping up with schoolwork is difficult. These periods may last several weeks and may include social problems as well as a slide in academic performance. Research suggests that problems are more likely to occur during a transitional year, such as moving from elementary to middle school, or middle school to high school (Baker & Sansone, 1990; Pantleo, 1992). Some adolescents are able to get through this time with a minimal assistance from their parents or teachers. It may seem enough for a parent to be available simply to listen and suggest coping strategies, provide supportive home environment, and encourage the child’s participation in school activities. However, when the difficulties last longer than a single grading period, or are linked to a long-term pattern of poor school performance or problematic behavior, parents and teachers may need to intervene.

How to identify adolescents who are at risk of failure is another problem. Some “at-risk” indicators, such as those listed here, may represent persistent problems from the early elementary school years for some children (Jacobsen & Hofmann, 1997; O’Sullivan, 1989). Other students may overcome early difficulties but begin to

experience related problems during middle school or high school. For others, some of these indicators may become noticeable only in early adolescence. To intervene effectively, parents and teachers can be aware of some common indicators of an adolescent at risk for school failure, including

- Attention problems as a young child –the student has a school history of attention issues or disruptive behavior.
- Multiple retention in grade –the student has been retained one or more years.
- Poor grades –the student consistently performs at barely average or below average levels.
- Absenteeism –the student is absent five or more days per term.
- Lack of connection with the school –the student is not involved in sports, music, or other school-related extracurricular activities.
- Behavior problems –the student may be frequently undisciplined or show a sudden change in school behavior, such as withdrawing from class discussions.
- Lack of confidence –the student believes that success is linked to native intelligence rather than hard work, and believes that his or her own ability is insufficient, and nothing can be done to change the situation.
- Limited goals for the future –the student seems unaware of career options or how to attain these goals.

When more than one of these attributes characterizes an adolescent, the student will likely need assistance from both parents and teachers to complete his or her educational experience successfully. Girls and students from culturally or linguistically diverse

groups, may be especially at risk for academic failure. If they exhibit these behaviors (Steinberg, 1996, Debold, 1995). Stepping back and letting those students “figure it out” or “take responsibility for their own learning” may lead to a deeper cycle of failure within the school environment.

Now, does parenting or social structure determine children’s success in school? According to Montgomery and Rossi (1994), during the 1960’s, researchers who adopted the first perspective argued that culturally disadvantaged black, Latino and low-income youth were disabled by home environments that failed to stimulate intellectual development, reward student achievement, and support school completion (Deutsch et al., 1967)

There are two main flaws with the “cultural disadvantage”: (1) it suggests the average low-income family is dysfunctional, and (2) it views cultural difference deficit. Although the reported incidence of family conditions that place children at risk (e.g., neglect or abuse) is higher for low-income families, there is no evidence that the average low-income home fails to foster healthy child development. Difference in child-rearing practices may be appropriate responses to environmental differences- it is wrong to assume, for example, that an optimally functioning Latino or black family would behave precisely like a middle-class white family (Slaughter and McWorter, 1985, p.12). Recent research does suggest that cultural dissonance may lead to problems in the classroom and between parents and teachers, but that should not imply that the home culture is inferior or not supportive of learning. Rather, it suggests that teachers, parents, and students must adapt (not necessarily assimilate) to each other.

Other researchers have asserted that socioeconomic disadvantages constrain educational opportunities for poor children and children of color (Bowles and Gintis, 1976) Emphasizing social inequalities, these researchers argue that the instruction that poor children receive is inferior to the instruction of middle-class and upper class students. For example, Ryan (1976) states that instead of “blaming the victim” by

pointing to deficiencies in the ability, character, or family functioning of students, researchers need to look at structural problems in schools and society.

Researcher suggests that structural problems in schools and society do explain much of the variance in student performance. As has been pointed out in numerous researches, economic disparities and low social status can influence a child's ability, willingness, and opportunities to learn. However, while socioeconomic explanations may explain broad disparities in student outcomes, they do not explain the variations in demographic groups. Thus, family and socioeconomic explanations, by themselves, do not identify the specific school inputs and external resources associated with high (or low) academic performance.

Researchers increasingly conceptualize poor educational performance as the outcome of a process of disengagement that may begin as early as a child's entry into school (Finn, 1989, Kelly, 1989; Merchant, 1987; Rumberger, 1987; Natriello, 1984). According to this model, students who do not identify, participate, and succeed in school activities become increasingly at risk of academic failure and dropout. In order to improve student achievement and persistence, it is suggested that the school climate must foster "investment" behavior –schools must encourage student involvement in academic and extracurricular activities by stimulating their interest, increasing their personal resources (e.g., remediating skill deficiencies), and rewarding their efforts.

Although models of disengagement often employ sociological concepts (e.g., alienation) to explain student behavior, they are usually used to analyze student performance in the context of school interactions rather than as symptoms of social maladies. Lacking the politically charged nature of terms such as "cultural disadvantage" or "socioeconomic oppression", the relatively neutral concept of disengagement has become a part of the lexicon of diverse groups of researchers, policymakers, and educators

Is unconscious or needless failure possible? According to Brophy (1996), “Failure syndrome” is another one of several terms that teachers commonly use (others include “low self-concept” “defeated”, and “frustrated”), to describe students who approach assignments with very low expectations of success and who tend to give up at early signs of difficulty. Psychologists have described this phenomenon as “learned helplessness”, a slightly more technical definition but referring to a similar pattern of behavior. Unlike students of limited ability, who often fail despite their best efforts, failure syndrome students often fail needlessly because they do not invest their best efforts—they begin tasks half-heartedly and simply give up when they encounter difficulty.

But, who are failure syndrome students? Some students, especially in the early grades, show failure syndrome tendencies as part of larger patterns of emotional immaturity (for example, low frustration tolerance or avoidance, inhibition, or adult dependency as reactions to stress). They may focus more on dependency-related desires for attention from the teacher than on trying to learn what an academic activity is designed to teach. This pattern may be a defense mechanism exhibited by some children who feel unable to compete with successful siblings, who lack confidence in their own abilities, or who have acquired failure expectations from their parents or teachers. Parents or teachers may communicate low expectations through a variety of direct and indirect means, especially to students who have been assigned labels such as “learning impaired”.

Most Failure syndrome symptoms, however, develop through social learning mechanisms centered around experiences with failure. Most children begin school with enthusiasm, but over time many find the experience anxiety provoking and psychologically threatening. Many children find it difficult to have their performance monitored in classroom where failure carried the danger of public humiliation.

It is not surprising, therefore, that some students, especially those who have experienced a continuing history of failure or a recent cycle of failure, begin to believe that they lack the ability to succeed. Eventually such students abandon serious attempts to master tasks and begin to concentrate instead on preserving their self-esteem in their own eyes and their reputations in the eyes of others (Ames, 1987; Rohrkemper & Corno, 1988)

What strategies help failure syndrome students? Failure syndrome students need assistance in regaining self-confidence in their academic abilities and in developing strategies for coping with failure and persisting with problem-solving efforts when they experience difficulties. Many specific suggestions have emerged from research on particular theoretical concepts or treatment approaches. Many of these involve what Ames (1987) has called “cognition retraining”. Three of the more prominent approaches to cognition retraining are attribution retraining, efficacy training, and strategy training.

Attribution retraining, involves bringing about changes in students’ tendencies to attribute failure to lack of ability rather than to a remediable cause, such as insufficient effort or use of an inappropriate strategy. Typically, attribution retraining involves exposing students to a planned series of experiences, couched within an achievement context, in which modeling, socialization, practice, and feedback are used to teach them to (1) concentrate on the task at hand rather than worry about failing, (2) cope with failures by retracing their steps to find their mistake or by analyzing the problem to find another approach, and (3) attribute their failures to insufficient effort, lack of information, or use of ineffective strategies rather than to lack of ability.

Efficacy Training programs involve exposing students to a planned set of experiences within an achievement context and providing them with modeling, instruction, and feedback. However, while attribution retaining programs were developed specifically for learned helplessness students and thus focus on teaching constructive response to failure, efficacy training programs were developed primarily for

low achievers who have become accustomed to failure and have developed generalized low self-concepts of ability. Consequently, efficacy training helps students set realistic goals and pursue them with the recognition that they have the ability needed to reach those goals if they apply reasonable effort.

Strategy training is an approach in which modeling and instruction are used to teach problem-solving strategies and related self-talk that students need to handle tasks successfully. Strategy training is a component of good cognitive skill instruction to all students; it is not primarily a remedial technique. However, it is especially important for use with frustrated students who have not developed effective learning and problem-solving strategies on their own, but can learn them through modeling and explicit instruction

Ames (1987) noted that these cognitive retraining approaches do not take into account the social aspects of the classroom and the reward structures in effect there. Citing findings that an emphasis on competition and social comparison will increase performance anxiety, Ames recommended emphasizing private rather than public feedback, phrasing such feedback in terms of progress beyond the individual's own previous levels rather than comparisons with classmates, and avoiding such practices as publicly grading on a curve or posting students' achievement scores.

How can teachers help these students? Brophy (1995) found that teachers were unusually confident about their ability to intervene successfully with failure syndrome students. They tended to mention similar response strategies regardless of grade level, location, or effectiveness ratings. A few spoke of providing support and encouragement to such students without making any demands on them; others spoke of making demands without providing special support or assistance; but most suggested a combination of support, encouragement, and task assistance to shape gradual improvement in work habits.

These teachers would make it clear to failure syndrome students that they were expected to work conscientiously and persistently so as to turn in work done completely and correctly, but they would also provide help if needed, reassure them that they would not be given work that they could not do, monitor their progress and provide any needed assistance, and reinforce them by praising their accomplishments publicly. This special treatment would be faded gradually as the students gained confidence and began to work more persistently and independently. These strategies are in line with what is known about cognitive retraining.

Brophy (1998) found that highly effective teachers and other teachers generally implemented similar strategies to help failure syndrome students –such as including encouragement and shaping strategies in their responses to the student, engaging in supportive behaviors, providing reassurance, and making personal appeals to the student to improve performance. But the higher-rated, more-effective teachers that appeared to place greater emphasis on insisting on better effort and seemed to have greater confidence that the improvements the student could achieve would be stable over time rather than merely temporary. They tended to assume that the demands made on students were appropriate (and therefore that failure syndrome problems stemmed from the students' mistakenly pessimistic attributions and self-efficacy perceptions), while lower-rated teachers were more likely to fear that they tasks demands were too difficult for the student to handle.

Dweck and Elliott (1983) argued that students who have developed an “entity” view of ability (e.g., who see it as fixed and limited) stand to benefit from direct training designed to shift them to an “incremental” view (e.g., seeing ability as something that can be developed through practice).

Teacher behaviors that encourage incremental rather than entity views of ability include

- acting more as resource persons than as judges,

- focusing students more on learning processes than on outcomes,
- reacting to errors as natural and useful parts of the learning process rather than as evidence of failure,
- stressing effort over ability and personal standards over normative standards when giving feedback, and
- attempting to stimulate achievement efforts through intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivational strategies

Covington (citing Skinner, Welbourn, & Connell, (1990)) differentiates between success and failure-oriented students. This orientation influences how they see themselves in the competitive arena of the classroom:

When children believe that they can exert control over success in school, they perform better on cognitive tasks. And, when children succeed in school they are more likely to view school performance as a controllable outcome. Children who are not doing well in school will perceive themselves as having no control over academic success and failures and those beliefs will subsequently generate performances that serve to confirm their beliefs (Skinner et al., 1990, as cited in Covington, 1992, p. 38)

Covington (1992) then departs from his predecessors in offering us a trichotomy of student perceptions of self-worth: (1) success-oriented students, those who are academically competent, (2) failure avoiders, who are uncertain about the probability of success; and (3) failure acceptors, who see themselves as doomed from the outset. He describes the first two orientations through the following examples of Losa and John.

Losa believes in herself as capable of success in the classroom. Her frequent success reaffirms this self-concept. But when failure does occur in school (a rare occurrence), she quickly infers that she didn't try hard enough or didn't understand the task well enough to perform well on it. In this sense, failure is not a threat. It does not lead to a sense of incompetence but rather one of ignorance: "There must be something I missed—something correctable if I just work harder and smarter". In the face of failure, she relies on her sense of her own ability to infer a problem that leaves her feeling guilty but optimistic. As a result, she does better the next time. Under all circumstances, she's safe because she has desensitized herself to the potentially negative effects of evaluation. She has the inner resources to risk comfortably.

But the failure-avoiding student responds to success and failure differently. John is a self-doubting, apathetic high school senior. When faced with an academic challenge, his first thought is that he just isn't smart enough to succeed. This pessimism contributed to a lack of effort. So his performance is likely to be borderline, at best, which reinforces his feelings of inadequacy, and so on. To make matters worse, John can even extend this counterproductive self-concept into those occasions when he succeeds. His internal sense of low ability can leave him worrying that he really didn't deserve the high grade. Further, he might be concerned that someone might discover that he's really only a high-achieving imposture. He lacks any sense of pride in accomplishment that he was just lucky to do well this time. In effect, John can snatch defeat from the jaws of imminent victory, resulting once again in a kind of pessimism that promises more poor performance in the future. Under no circumstances is he safe, making it very difficult to risk trying something new or something that might require a stretch on his part. This is where John's apathy comes from. Covington (1992) points out that John is not "unmotivated" at all. Rather, he is highly motivated, but to do the counterproductive thing from an academic achievement point of view.

And, to complete the picture, in a similar situation we also find failure-accepting students. They are even more trapped than John. These students have experienced so much failure over such a long period of time that they have given up completely on themselves and school. There is no desire to “try” left in them and thus they are assured of virtually never succeeding academically. As a result, they are constantly bombarded with compelling evidence of their own “stupidity”. Soon they become numbered to the onslaught and become mental dropouts. Covington refers to this as learned helplessness. Even if they happen to succeed at something, these students are sure to credit blind luck, disregard any message of possible competence, and remain enmeshed in a tangle of doom. Such students feel absolutely no control over what happens to them in school and therefore are always vulnerable. Taking the risks needed to learn is not only beyond their reach, it’s also beyond their frame of reference.

Does teacher preparation contribute to the problem of failing students? According to the American Federation of Teachers (2000), all too often students at-risk of failure are taught by individuals who have not been adequately prepared to teach children effectively. As the report of National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future indicates, a full 14 percent of the teacher work force is hired on a temporary, provisional, or emergency basis, and

“In the nation’s poorest schools, where hiring is most lax and teacher turnover is constant, the result are disastrous. Thousands of children are taught throughout their school careers by a parade of teachers without preparation in the fields they teach, inexperienced beginners with little training and mentoring, and short-term substitutes trying to cope with constant staff disruptions. It is more surprising that some of these children manage to learn than that so many fail to do so” (What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future. 1996. P.16)

Indeed, in some New York schools under registration review (SURR) —where the rate of student failure is so high that they schools are threatened with closure if they do not improve—more than half of the teachers are inexperienced and unlicensed (Darling-Hammond and Falk, 1995), not to mention that this is the case in many countries all over the world. Without experienced, well-trained teachers in these schools, neither holding students back nor socially promoting them is likely to have much effect. Districts must change their staffing practices and develop policies to attract and maintain a skilled teaching force, especially in schools with high-risk student populations.

In cases like this, early intervention is necessary. The evidence is overwhelming—the best, most cost-effective remedial program is one that prevents students from falling behind in the first place. As Alexander, Entwisle, and Dauber (1994) put it, the answer to social promotion and retention is intervention policies that ensure that resources are brought to bear to promote successful student learning, especially for those children at risk of failure.

For long-term success, it is crucial that young students be provided with a firm academic foundation, particularly in reading. Institutions must give full attention to ensuring that every student read by third grade. To do this it is necessary to have well-trained teachers who not only can identify problems early, but who also can bring to bear a combination of instructional methods to deal with youngsters' reading difficulties. For example, research has indicated that, if they are to learn to read well, many children need explicit instruction in decoding and comprehension skills as well as engaging curricular materials. Unfortunately, many teachers have little training in teaching such skills, and are apt to have limited knowledge of effective programs for working with children at risk (Moats, 1995). A top-priority policy objective for any institution that wishes to eliminate social promotion and that wants kids to “get it right from the start” is to require that all teachers, especially at the elementary school level, are thoroughly skilled in the teaching of reading

What influence do students' aspirations have on their failures or success in school? Aspirations are strong desires to reach something high or great. Young people's aspirations guide what students learn in school, how they prepare for adult life, and what they eventually do (Walberg, 1989). Aspirations reflect individuals' ideas of the "possible selves", what they would like to become, what they might become, and what they do not wish to become (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Realizing aspirations requires the investment of time, energy, and resources—both from the young person and from others (Sherwood, 1989). The extent to which communities mobilize such support bears on the quality of life—both among students and among adults. A similar observation applies to realizing career or employment aspirations. In short, conditions in the community interact with the imaginations of students as they realize their aspirations.

Motivation as an important contribution factor to the relative success or failure in second language acquisition has been discussed for some socio-linguistic purposes. Gardner et al (1963) discuss the role of motivation in a language learning study that examined the effect of motivation on vocabulary acquisition. This study revealed that subjects with higher integrative motivation acquired the vocabulary better than subjects with lower integrative motivation.

Several circumstances make rural students vulnerable to poor schooling outcomes and lower educational aspirations. First, the relationship between socioeconomic status and educational outcomes has been clearly documented in the educational and psychological literature. The influence of this relationship outweighs the influence of school location (rural, suburban, or urban) or school size (Marion, Mirochnik, McCaul & McIntyre, 1991, Center for Research and Evaluation, 1991). Wherever they live or go to school, students who come from low-income circumstances have lower educational aspirations than do their more economically advantaged peers.

Second, poverty rate is higher in rural areas of the Americas than it is elsewhere. Further, rural families with two people working are falling into poverty at a very high rate

(O'Hare, 1988). The combination of rising tuition rates and falling family incomes may make attending college an unrealistic choice for many rural students.

A third circumstance that influences the aspirations of rural students is the education level of parents. Here, too, rural students suffer an early disadvantage. Seniors attending schools in metropolitan areas are 1.5 times more likely to have a parent with at least a bachelor's degree than non-metropolitan students (Pollard & O'Hare, 1990). This circumstance is unlikely to change, since the students who stay in rural areas to become parents and raise families differ from those rural young people who leave. As a group, those who stay have the lowest educational aspirations of America's young people, and they tend to earn less than those who leave (Cobb, McIntyre, & Pratt, 1990).

The desire to go to college represents only one type of aspiration. Another is the value students place simply on finishing high school. In an analysis of the High School and Beyond data, McCaul (1989) found that rural dropouts, like dropouts from urban and suburban schools, generally made lower grades and scored lower on achievement tests than their peers who graduated. Rural dropouts also showed signs of low self-esteem and lacked a sense of control over their own lives compared with peers who stayed in school. Like their suburban and urban counterparts, rural youth reported that poor grades and the feeling that "school was not for me" were the main reasons they left school early.

Reasons rural students cited more frequently than their urban and suburban counterparts were economic (someone offered me a job) and personal (pregnancy, marriage, disability, illness, or an inability to get along with teachers).

McCaul also found that a higher proportion of rural minority students dropped out than rural white students, especially among Hispanics. Almost half of rural dropouts were from the bottom quartile of socioeconomic status.

A quarter of the students that attend a high school come from rural areas. If it is not possible to squander the resource represented by this significant group of young people, the schools, the community, and the nation must work together to raise aspirations. A few examples of what can be done follow:

- Low grades and low achievement can lead to a sense that “school is not for me”. Elementary schools need to provide all students with the tools necessary for success. These include a firm grounding in basic content, in learning to learn, and in higher-order thinking strategies.
- Secondary schools need more relevant curricula so that students answer for themselves the question, “Why do I have to know this?” The secondary school curriculum should stress the kinds of skills adults need, for example, working cooperatively and problem-solving
- Schools also should organize to address the social and emotional needs of students. Matching small groups of students with a caring adult can provide students the coaching they need to jump all the hurdles that lie between them and high school graduation.
- Parents can raise their own expectations for their children’s academic achievement. They should insist that teachers and students raise their expectations as well. Parents can also express their support for the value of education and help the schools celebrate successes
- The community can signal its commitment to education by providing scholarships, recognizing academic as well as athletic prowess, helping to improve local schools, creating apprenticeship and work/study opportunities, and developing venture capital for young entrepreneurs

- School board members can revise the mission of the institution so that the school's goal is not only to prepare students to leave, but also empower them to stay in rural areas
- Employers can refuse full-time employment to people of school age and support part-time employees in their efforts to finish school.
- Communities, counties, states (provinces), and congress (legislature) can create economic and technological development policies that encourage diversification of the rural economy

The literature presented allows us to view failing students from different perspectives. There are those students who are success-oriented, those who are academically competent; students who are failure-avoiders, who are uncertain about the probability of success, and failure-acceptors who see themselves as doomed from the outset (Covington, 1992). With this information, it makes it possible for some of us to make a reflection. It makes us reflect on our own school experiences, which makes us ask ourselves, which category did we fall into; what categories did our classmates fall into; and, if we are teaching, what category does our students fall into (Stiggings, 1997).

Failure syndrome students approach assignments with very low expectations of success and tend to give up at the early signs of difficulty. Many teachers use strategies with these students that are in line with what we know about cognitive retraining strategies such as attribution training, efficacy training, and strategy training. Teachers' effectiveness can be enhanced, however, if they use modeling to teach coping strategies, especially techniques for persisting in the face of frustration or failure (Brophy, 1996).

"Cultural disadvantages" and "socioeconomic disadvantages" are two of the main problems, which affect students' performance in school. According to the researchers, "culturally disadvantaged" students fail because they are not prepared for the high

expectations and standards of their middle class teachers. Socioeconomic disadvantages constrain educational opportunities for poor students and students of minority groups. The instruction that poor students receive is inferior to the instruction of middle class and upper class students. Instead of “blaming the victim” by pointing to deficiencies in the ability, character, or family functioning of students, researchers need to look at structural problems in schools and society

The best, and most cost-effect remedial program is one that prevents students from falling behind in the first place. The answer is intervention policies that ensure that resources are brought to bear to promote successful student learning, especially for those children at-risk of failing. It is crucial that young students be provided with a firm academic foundation. To do this, it is necessary to have well trained teachers who not only identify problems early, but who can also bring to bear a combination of methods deal with youngsters’ difficulties. (American Federation of Teachers, 2000).

Understanding the factors that may put an adolescent at-risk for academic failure will help parents determine if their teen is in need of extra support. Above all, parents need to persevere. The teen years do pass, and most adolescents survive them, in spite of bumps along the way. Being aware of common problems can help parents know when it is important to reach out and ask for help before a “difficult time” develops into a more serious situation. (Robertson, 2000).

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

PROCEDURE

This study is applied research using survey and content analysis techniques. It has been conducted following the steps below.

The professional literature related to the topic under investigation was reviewed and the most important points are presented in summary in the second chapter of this document, entitled the Review of the Literature.

A letter was written requesting the permission of school administrators to gather data in the school selected for this study. The cooperation of all the English teachers who instruct the 5th level students of all three areas of specialization: science, letters and commerce, as well as administrators and students of the 5th level of the Instituto Urracá was requested and received.

A questionnaire was administered to the students of the 5th level in the areas of science, letters, and commerce to obtain information about their opinions of the failure rate in the English subject, the causes of these failures, and the informants' background in the English language. A questionnaire was also administered to the teachers who instruct these students in the English language at the 5th level of all three tracts in order to solicit their opinions as to why so many students fail in the English subject in the various areas of specialization as well as information regarding their own experiences, attitudes, and preparation in the English language, and the type of instructional methodology these teachers use.

The data resulting from both the questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted, and the resulting conclusions are presented in the fourth chapter of this project, entitled Findings and Conclusions. Finally, based upon the conclusions, recommendations have been formulated and are also presented in the final chapter of this document.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The sample of secondary school students included those of the 5th level of science, letters, and commerce tracts of the Instituto Urracá; and the sample of secondary school teachers who work with the 5th level programs of the science, letters, and commerce tracts of this secondary school, which has been functioning since 1964, and awards diplomas in the areas of science, letters and commerce. The Instituto Urracá, until 1998, housed both a primer ciclo and a segundo ciclo (junior high and high school). At the time of this research, this school only provides instruction for the fourth, fifth, and sixth levels, which are the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. The student enrollment is 2,800 students; and there are 152 teachers of whom 24 are English teachers. English is an obligatory subject in all diploma areas.

The Instituto Urracá is located in the Corregimiento of Canto del Llano in the district of Santiago. The center includes a complex of structures, most of which are two story buildings housing classes, laboratories, including a language laboratory, library, cafeteria, meeting rooms, offices, and so forth. Recently, in 1999, a new building was constructed to house two classrooms and a laboratory. A gymnasium was under construction at the time of the research. The school also has athletic fields and all of the other facilities necessary to provide a well-rounded high school education.

The students are primarily from lower, lower-middle, and middle-income families; and are subject to all of the economic and social problems related to their economic status. The school population includes both urban and rural students, many of the latter travel long distances everyday to attend classes. The facilities of the Instituto Urracá are also used by the Escuela Nocturna Oficial de Santiago, which is the official night school providing adult education for the community of Santiago and the surrounding areas.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

OBSERVATIONS

During the process of collecting the data to respond to the research question, the researchers administered questionnaires to five professors who had many years of experience working in public schools; all of these teachers are currently working at the Instituto Uracá. Questionnaires were also administered to over 700 students of the 5th level of all three tracts: Science, Letters and Commerce; on both the morning and afternoon schedules

The researcher encountered no problems in obtaining the necessary permission from the director of the school, who was very cooperative and demonstrated great enthusiasm about the study. Full cooperation was offered by the teachers from the first moment the data collection began. Aware of the nature of the study, the teachers were very willing to offer any information that the researcher needed to be up-to-date with the current academic situation that has been taking place among their groups since the beginning of the school year. The teachers also showed much interest in being provided with the conclusions, and all the recommendations that emerged after having analyzed the data, so that they could take them into account for professional improvement. Furthermore, the students were fully cooperative, and took much pride in filling out the questionnaires that had been handed out to them. Most of them were very happy to be making a contribution towards the study, and a few students also mentioned that they felt that by filling out the questionnaires they were also making a statement towards the importance of their education.

FINDINGS

In order to elicit information about the differences in rate of failure among students of the 5th year Science, Letters, and Commerce tracts of the Instituto Urracá high school in Santiago, Veraguas Province; a questionnaire was administered to the students of this level (See Appendix A). Another questionnaire was administered to five English teachers who work with these groups (See Appendix B).

The first data analyzed was that collected from the English teacher who instructs the groups of the Commerce tract on the morning schedule. In response to the first question, as to what tract the subject is instructing the English language, the subject is working with the Commerce tract.

In response to the second question, as to how many years the subject has been teaching English in this tract in the Instituto Urracá, the subject has been teaching English in this tract for seventeen (17) years.

In response to the third question, as to whether the subject has instructed in other tracts, the response was positive; the subject has taught both the Science and Letters.

In response to the fourth question, as to whether the subject has a preference for instructing any one of these tracts, the answer was positive, the subject prefers to work with the groups of the Letters tract because these students like the English language.

In response to the fifth question, as to what type of topics in English the subject usually teaches to the Commerce tract, the subject stated that it depends on the type of topics the students like most, according to their ages and interests, because this is the only way the students will feel motivated and have fun while learning the English language.

In response to the sixth question, as to how the subject perceives the attitude of his/her students towards the English subject, the following information emerged: According to

the informant, the students like the English subject more or less. Furthermore, the subject added that the reason for this is that the students are not taught English for communication, and that is why they perceive the subject as hard and boring.

In response to the seventh question, as to how the subject perceives the attitude of the students towards him/her, the following information emerged: the subject perceives that the students like him/her, because he/she has tried to understand them, and get them to speak as much as they can in the English language.

In response to the eighth question, as to which is the instrument that the subject uses most often to evaluate the students, the following information has emerged: the instrument most used by the subject is the oral exam; the least used is the written exam.

In response to the ninth question, as to whether there are many failures among the student in the English subject, the following information has emerged: according to the subject there are many failures among the groups that he/she instructs; the reason for this is that only one bimester has passed, and during this bimester the students are beginning to adjust to the teacher and his/her way of teaching the course; and, in general terms, the subject does not use the Spanish language in the classroom and the students are trying to adapt themselves to this situation.

In response to the tenth question, as to according to the subject, how the students perceive the English course in terms of difficulty; the following information has emerged: according to the subject, the students perceive the course as more or less difficult, and adds that when the class is on a topic they like, they try to express themselves and use the English language.

In response to the eleventh question, as to what professional preparation (degrees) the subject has in the English language, the following information has emerged: the

subject has a Licenciatura (BA degree) in English and a degree in Education (profesorado), and had attended professional seminars

In response to the twelfth question, as to whether the subject practices the English language or not; the subject responded affirmatively, and claims to practice the language at home, with his/her students, through reading, through audio/visual activities, and with his/her colleagues.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to whether the subject believes his/her students can communicate in the English language, the following information emerged. according to the subject, his her students can communicate in a “regular” manner in the English language.

In response to the fourteenth question, as to why there are so many failures in the English course, according to the subject; at the end of the year, there are very few failures among the group that he/she teaches.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what can be done to motivate the students to study more, according to the subject; the students have to find out how important English is for themselves and for their future, and when they have done so, they will find a way to make better grades.

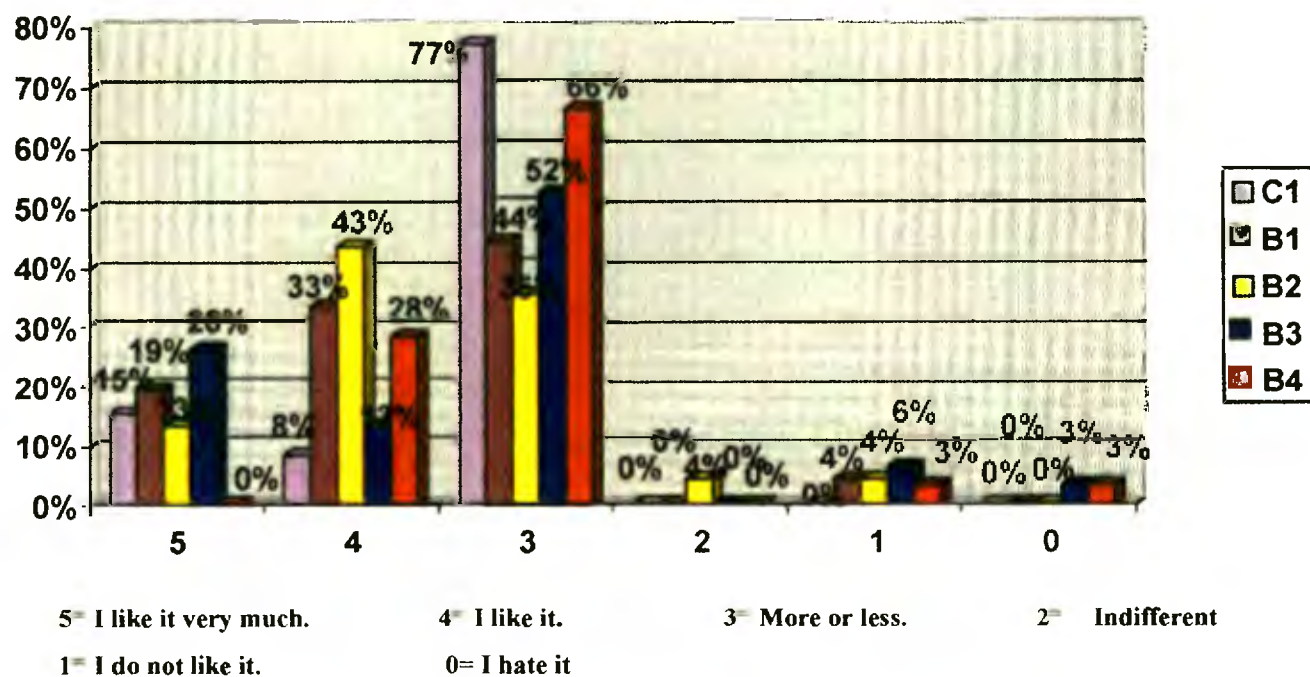
The following data were obtained from the Commerce groups on the morning schedules. In response to the first question, as to in what tract the subjects are studying, one hundred and twenty-three (123) students answered that they were studying in the Commerce tract

In response to the second question, as to whether they like the English subject, and why? The following emerged:

TABLE 1

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
C1	13	2	15%	1	8%	10	77%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B1	27	5	19%	9	33%	12	44%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%
B2	23	3	13%	10	43%	8	35%	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
B3	31	8	26%	4	13%	16	52%	0	0%	2	6%	1	3%
B4	29	0	0%	8	28%	19	66%	0	0%	1	3%	1	3%
Total	123	18	15%	32	26%	65	53%	1	.08%	5	4%	2	1%

GRAPH 1



The average number of points (average attitude toward this subject) is 3.41, which implies that the subjects like the English course more or less.

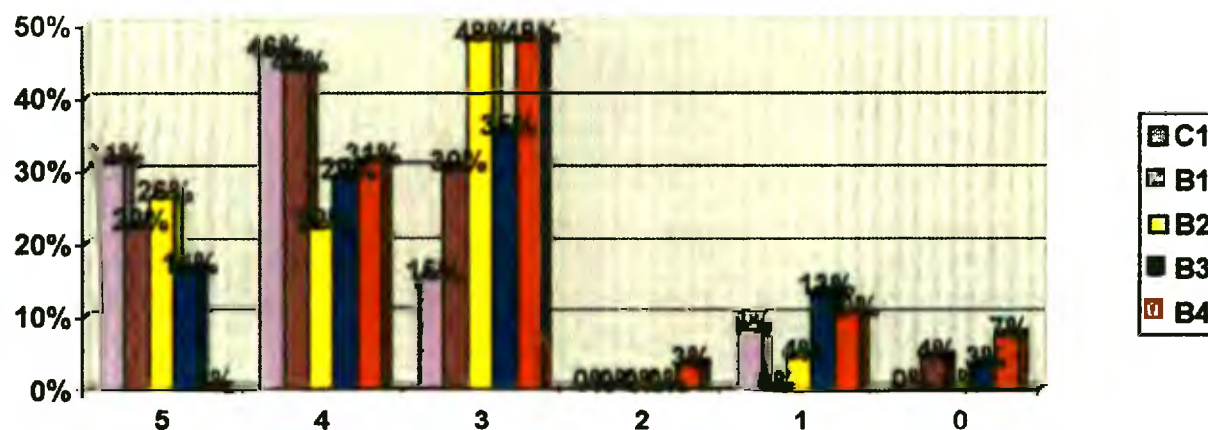
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: some stated as a reason that it is a subject that has to be benefited from, and has to be studied intensively. One subject stated that English is a career that he/she dreams of pursuing. Others stated that it is an important subject. Some subjects stated that English is the language of the future. Others stated that English is a requirement to obtain jobs. One subject stated that it is an interesting and fun subject. However, most of the subjects who chose this item agreed that English is an important and necessary language to learn. Other subjects stated, as reasons, that by learning English they can communicate on any given occasion with someone who speaks the language. One subject stated that to be able to work in the commercial area, it is necessary to know the language. And most of the subjects, who expressed their liking for this subject, did so because it is an important and necessary subject. Some stated that they like English more or less, and gave reasons such as that it is usually a complicated subject. Some subjects stated that they do not find it necessary. Others stated that they are not very interested in this subject. Many stated that they do not understand most of what is taught. One subject stated that her liking for this course depends on the teacher who instructs it. However, most of the subjects stated that they do not understand the language most of the time and, therefore, have problems using it. However, one subject stated that she/he feels indifferent toward this subject, and added that it is because the teacher does not instruct the class with the grace and enthusiasm teachers should have in order to interest him/her. Some even expressed a dislike towards the English subject, stated that it is because they do not understand. One subject said he/she finds it very complicated. Another stated that he/she always gets low grades, and one subject said that he/she hates it. Some subjects even claimed to detest the English subject, and stated that “it takes a gringo to understand the teacher”, and that perhaps if the teacher were replaced, he/she would like the course more. The other subject stated that he/she never understands what is being taught.

In response to the third question, as to whether the subjects like their English teacher, the following emerged.

TABLE 2

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
C1	13	4	31%	6	46%	2	15%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%
B1	27	6	22%	12	44%	8	30%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%
B2	23	6	26%	5	22%	11	48%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%
B3	31	5	16%	9	29%	11	35%	0	0%	4	13%	1	3%
B4	29	0	0%	9	31%	14	48%	1	3%	3	10%	2	7%
Total	123	21	19%	41	34%	46	35%	1	.06%	9	7%	4	3%

GRAPH 2



5= I like him/her very much. 4= I like him/her. 3= More or less. 2= Indifferent
 1= I do not like him/her. 0= I hate her

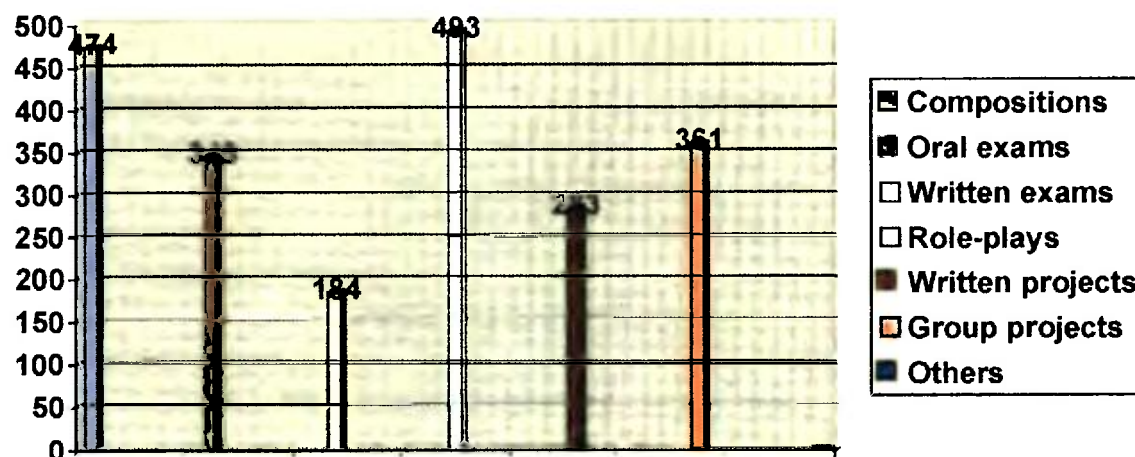
The average number of points (average attitude towards the professor) is 3.40, which implies that the subjects like their teacher more or less.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: one stated that she/he is very neat and orderly. Another stated that she/he is very strict, yet that is how things are accomplished, with dedication and effort. One subject stated that she/he is

very caring. Another stated that she/he helps them clear doubts, and they learn some things. Some subjects stated that she/he is good in explaining her classes, and is very dynamic. However, most of them stated that they like her/him very much because they have learned more English with her/him than with other teachers in previous years. Others stated that they find their teacher more or less because some of them find that he/she is too hard on them. Others, stated that she/he wants everything to be said in English, and he/she does not accept anything they say if it is in Spanish. Others stated that she/he hardly ever speaks Spanish. One subject stated that sometimes the teacher gives them tests on material that was not even explained. However, most of the subjects stated that they simply do not understand their teacher. However, some stated that they feel indifferent towards their teacher, adding that she/he is nothing to them, she/he is not related to them in any way, so they have no reason to feel anything for her. And some even stated that they do not like their teacher because, according to one of the subjects, he/she asks for homework that he/she never even assigned or explained. Another subject stated that the teacher protests too much, and says everything in English. Other subjects stated that the teacher scolds them too much, and is a grouch. Another subject stated that he/she does not like the teachers form of evaluating the students. However, most of them agreed that the teacher does not know how to explain; he/she speaks too much in English, and they do not understand him/her. Others claimed to hate their teacher because, in addition to not liking the subject at all, the teacher makes it even more complicated, compared to their previous teacher. They also stated that she/he is very bitter, he/she thinks he/she knows a lot, he/she never speaks in Spanish, and he/she is a very bad explainer.

In response to the fourth question, as to which is the form of evaluation the teacher uses most often to test her students' performance in the English subject, the following emerged

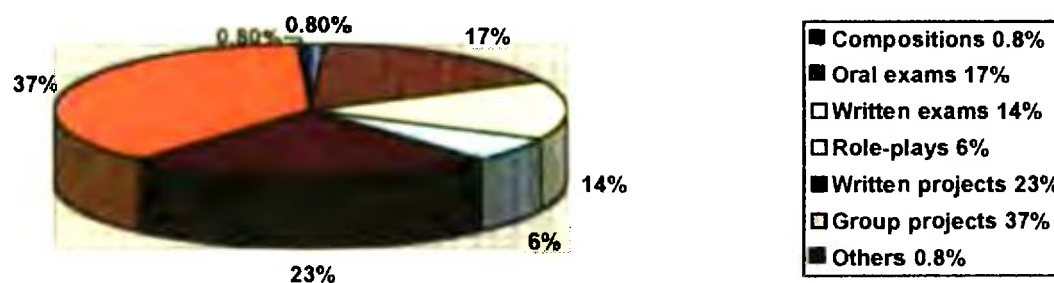
GRAPH 3



The form of evaluation most used by the teacher to test the subjects performance in the English language is the compositions, with an average of 184 points. The form of evaluation least used by the teacher is the role-play, with an average of 474 points. Note that this data does not correspond to the data provided by the teacher.

In response to the fifth question, as to which one of the previously mentioned forms of evaluation the subjects prefer. The following information emerged:

GRAPH 4



Only one subject prefers to write compositions because the words in the sentences and paragraphs are easy for him/her to work with

Seventeen (17) subjects prefer oral exams and presentations because, according to one of them, it allows them to develop their abilities. Another stated that he/she is good in English pronunciation. Another subject stated that he/she learns quickly, and when he/she has to write, he/she cannot understand. Nevertheless, most of the subjects like this form of evaluation because they can demonstrate what they have learned by putting the language into practice

Twenty-one (21) subjects stated that they prefer written tests because, according to some of them, they have more time to think and cheat. Others, state that they can use their memory, and it is much easier this way. One subject stated that he/she understands the questions better. However, most of the subjects stated that they like this form of evaluation because they can concentrate better and make more use of their memory.

Eight (8) subjects chose role-plays as their preferred form of evaluation because, according to one of them, they learn more and can make use of their memory. Another stated that this way they do not become bored. One subject stated that he/she does well in dramas. Another stated that he/she has more fun, and dramas make the class more interesting. Most of the subjects agreed that role-plays are more entertaining.

Twenty-eight (28) subjects prefer written projects because, according to the majority, they have a better chance of doing these projects at home, and they can consult with the dictionary and other people with experience on the matter. They also stated that they have more facility to work without pressure, and correct their mistakes easily. In addition, it allows them to prepare better for their tests, and put into practice what they have learned in class, using self-expression and their own opinions.

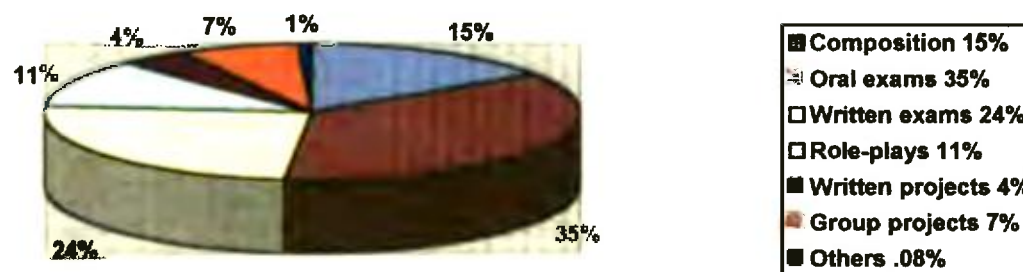
Moreover, some subjects mentioned that they like this form of evaluation better, because they can have someone outside of the school do their projects for them, and send them a bill for the cost of the work.

Fourty-six (46) subjects prefer group work because, according to them, it allows them to share knowledge and information, so their work can be more complete, and better organized. However, some stated that they liked this method of evaluation because others in the group do most of the work, while they make the same grade while doing nothing.

Only one (1) student selected “others” (drawings) as his/her preferred method of evaluation, because it is an exciting and easy way to make a good grade. And one (1) student did not answer the question.

In response to the sixth question, as to which of the previously mentioned forms of evaluation do the subjects like the least, and why? The following information emerged:

GRAPH 5



Eighteen (18) subjects stated that they do not like compositions. The most mentioned reasons were that the subjects have a very limited vocabulary; some of the

topics given by the teacher are very complicated; and that it is very hard to write in English

Thirty subjects (30) stated that they do not like written exams. Some of the reasons given were that there is only one correct answer to each item, and the teacher is the only person who knows the answer. One subject stated that sometimes there are items on the exams that have not even been explained during class. Another stated that written exams are boring. One subject stated that too many students cheat. However, most of the subjects agreed that these exams are too complicated for them; they do not have a vast vocabulary and there are terms that they do not understand. Nevertheless, one subject commented that she/he does not like these exams, because he/she is too lazy to fill them out

Forty-three (43) subjects stated that they do not like oral exams, because there is not enough time to prepare or remember what they have to say. One subject stated that this is only another way to “kill” students. Others stated that they become nervous, and their tongues stiffen. However, most of the subjects agreed that they do not understand the language well enough, they have a terrible pronunciation and it embarrasses them; and they make innumerable grammatical mistakes. Thus, one additional comment was that the teacher becomes ruthless when it is time for them to speak. (The researcher assumes that the subject refers to evaluation).

Fourteen (14) subjects stated that they do not like role-plays because they become nervous, and forget their lines (parts). One subject stated that she/he does not like to work with others. Another, stated that he/she had to memorize too much, and he/she usually forgets one word, and her/his whole mind goes blank. One subject stated that he/she has never liked to act. However, many subjects stated that teacher hardly ever assigns role-plays, so how could they possibly like them.

Five (5) subjects stated that they do not like written projects because they are boring; everything has to be written in English, and they do not understand; and because they do not like to write in English.

Four (4) subjects did not answer the question, and one (1) answered that he/she does not like “other” activities than those mentioned.

In response to the seventh question, as to whether or not there are many failures in the subjects’ group, and why they think there are so many failures in the English subject; the following information emerged.

Most of the subjects responded affirmatively; they blame the methodology of the teacher; they state that the teacher does not know how to explain, and they do not understand her when she speaks. However, some of these subjects stated that their classmates fail because they do not pay attention to the classes, and they do not study or make enough effort in learning.

Some subjects responded negatively, they said that there are not many or no failures at all in their groups. Two subjects stated that they do not know if there are many failures in their groups, and one added that she/he does not care; and two subjects did not respond to the question.

In response to the eighth question, as to what the subjects think can be done so students will not fail as much as they do; some subjects stated that their classmates should pay more attention to the teacher’s explanations during class. One subject stated that her/his teacher should have more patience, when explaining. Other subjects stated that the teacher should have more consideration for them. One subject suggested more written work. Some subjects stated that their teacher should make more use of their first language (Spanish). However, most of the subjects agreed that their classmates must study more, pay more attention during class, and seek the teacher’s or other classmates’

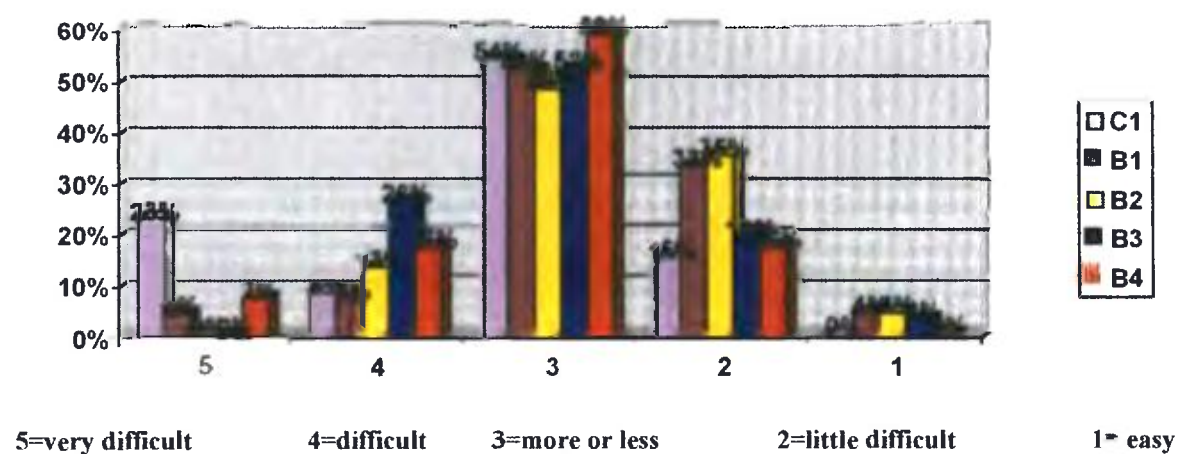
help when needed; and they also stated that the teacher must devote more time and patience to explaining the class, communicating with them, and assigning easier tasks.

In response to the ninth question, as to how difficult the subjects consider the English course to be, the following information emerged:

TABLE 4

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
C1	13	3	23%	1	8%	7	54%	2	15%	0	0%
B1	27	1	4%	2	7%	14	52%	9	33%	1	4%
B2	23	0	0%	3	13%	11	48%	8	35%	1	4%
B3	31	0	0%	8	26%	16	52%	6	19%	1	3%
B4	29	2	7%	5	17%	17	59%	5	17%	0	0%
TOTAL	123	6	8%	19	14%	65	53%	30	23%	3	2%

GRAPH 7



The average number of points (average grade of difficulty of the English subject) is 3.00 which implies that the course is perceived by the subjects as being “more or less” difficult.

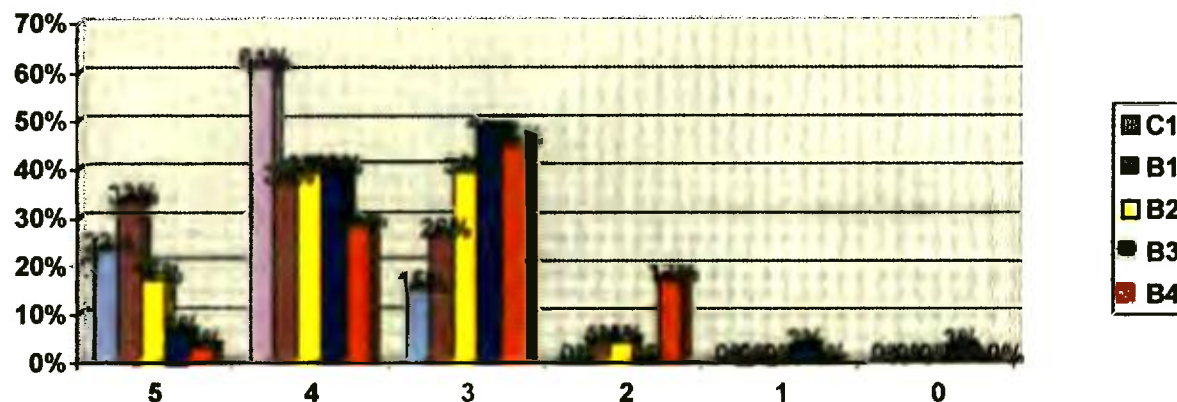
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects, included that the teacher does not explain well enough, so they do not understand. Some subjects stated that they understood some of their classes, but others were more difficult. One subject stated that the teacher does not have a specific technique to teach. Others stated that they do not pay enough attention. Some subjects stated that they are not accustomed to this language. Some added that if they studied more they might find the course easier. Some subjects also stated that the course is boring. However, most of the subjects agreed that they do not understand most of what is taught; some of what is taught is easy and some is difficult; and that the teacher does not explain clearly, most of the time.

In response to the tenth question, as to how the subjects classify their teacher's attitude, the following information emerged:

TABLE 5

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
C1	13	3	23%	8	61%	2	15%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B1	27	9	33%	10	37%	7	26%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
B2	23	4	17%	9	39%	9	39%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
B3	31	2	6%	12	39%	15	48%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
B4	29	1	3%	8	28%	13	45%	5	17%	0	0%	2	7%
TOTAL	123	19	16%	47	41%	46	35%	7	5%	1	0.6%	0	1%

GRAPH 8



5=Excellent 4=Good 3=Regular 2=indifferent 1=Bad 0= very bad

One student (B3) did not answer.

The average number of points (the average attitude of the professor towards the students) is of 3.54, which implies that the subjects have a somewhat positive perception of their teacher's attitude.

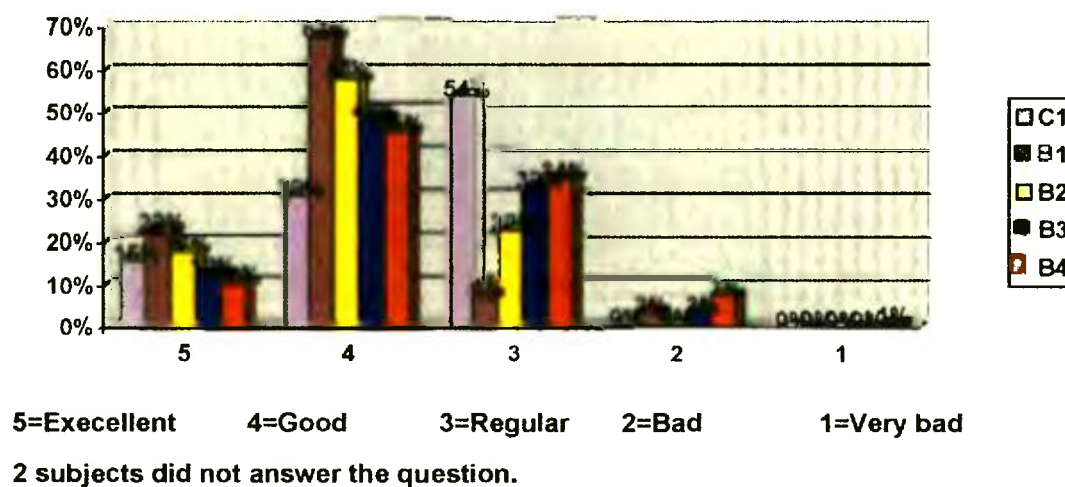
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects, included that the teacher is dynamic and interesting. Sometimes the teacher becomes angry unnecessarily. He/she is nice when the students cooperate with him/her. The teacher is a very strict person, and yells at them to try to get them to understand what is being taught. The teacher is very unjust sometimes, but he/she makes a great effort to explain, and help them understand. The teacher treats the students who behave better than the students who do not. Sometimes he/she assigns very hard tasks. However, most of the subjects agreed that the teacher is strict when she obtains a negative response and attitude from her students; he/she tries her best to explain the different topics during his/her classes; and she varies the grade of difficulty of the tasks she assigns and the topics she selects for the class.

In response to the eleventh question, as to how the subjects would evaluate their teachers methodology of instruction in the English language; the following information emerged:

TABLE 6

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
C1	13	2	15%	4	30%	7	54%	0	0%	0	0%
B1	27	6	22%	18	67%	2	7%	1	3%	0	0%
B2	23	4	17%	13	57%	5	22%	0	0%	0	0%
B3	31	4	12%	15	48%	10	32%	1	3%	0	0%
B4	29	3	10%	13	45%	10	34%	2	7%	1	3%
TOTAL	123	19	15%	63	49%	34	30%	4	3%	1	0.6%

GRAPH 9



The average number of points (average preparation in methodology of instruction) is of 3.72, which implies that the subjects perceive the teachers methodology of instruction of the English language as good.

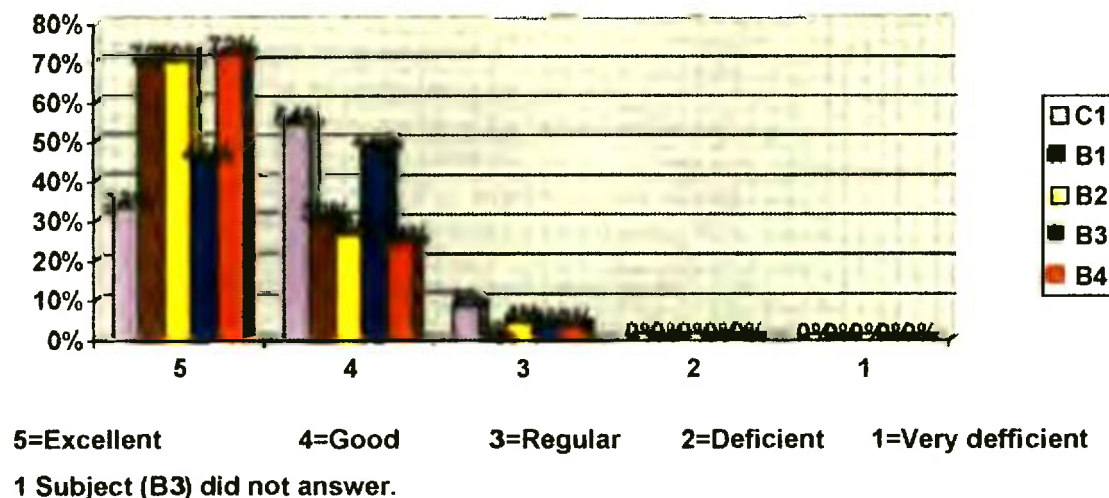
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects, included that the teacher uses a lot of dynamic activities to instruct them. The teacher expresses himself/herself well. The teacher demonstrates that she has vast knowledge of the subject, and handles it well. One subject stated that the teacher is not as hysterical when she teaches than when she is not. Furthermore, some subjects stated that she has very good methodology. One subject stated that the teacher instructs everything at the proper moment, with no hurry because he/she understands that they were not born knowing English. Moreover, most of the subjects agreed that the teacher is well prepared to instruct, though she needs to take it easier, and advance at a slower pace with the class.

In response to the twelfth question, as to whether the subjects think their teacher is fluent in the English language; the following information emerged:

TABLE 7

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
C1	13	5	33%	7	54%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
B1	27	19	70%	8	30%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B2	23	16	70%	6	26%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
B3	31	14	45%	15	48%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
B4	29	21	72%	7	24%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
TOTAL	123	75	59%	43	36%	4	4%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 10



The average number of points (average grade of fluency of the teacher in the English language) is of 4.54, which implies that the subject perceive the teacher's mastery of the English language as excellent.

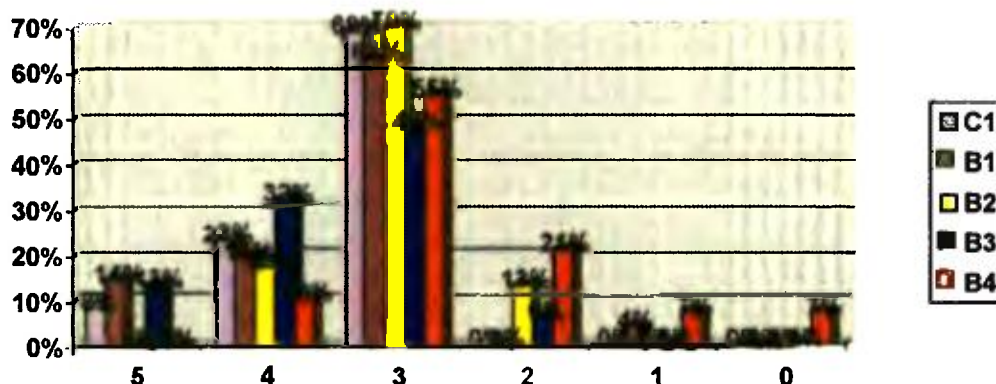
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects, include that the teacher speaks well. The teacher has many years of experience. The teacher reads and writes perfect English. There is no complaint about him/her. Some subjects stated that the teacher's pronunciation is very good. One subject stated that he/she "thinks" the teacher speaks English well, but he/she can not be sure because he/she does not know the language. However, most of the subjects stated that the teacher speaks the English language well.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to how the subjects would classify the attitude of their classmates towards their teacher, the following information emerged:

TABLE 8

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
C1	13	1	8%	3	23%	9	69%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B1	27	4	14%	5	19%	17	63%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%
B2	23	0	0%	4	17%	16	70%	3	13%	0	0%	0	0%
B3	31	4	13%	10	32%	15	48%	2	6%	0	0%	0	0%
B4	29	0	0%	3	10%	16	55%	6	21%	2	7%	2	7%
TOTAL	123	9	7%	25	20%	73	61%	11	8%	1	2%	2	1%

GRAPH 11



The average number of points (average attitude of the subjects towards the teacher) is of 3.16, which implies that the subjects' perceive their classmates' attitude as "more or less".

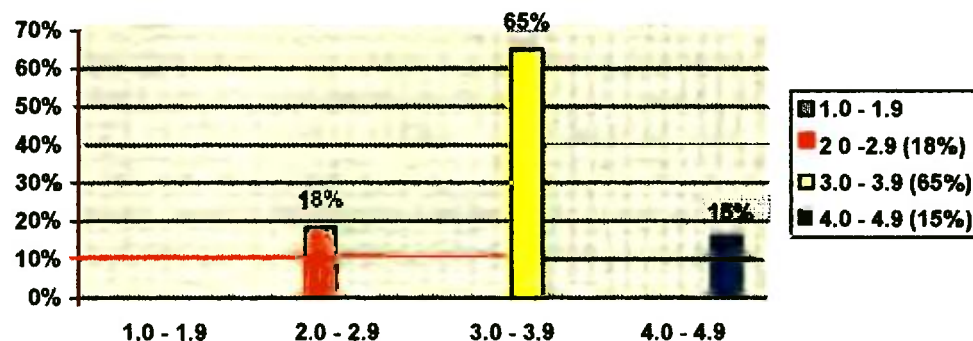
Among the reasons given by the subjects, was that the majority of the subjects do not like the subject nor the teacher. One subject stated that some of them hate the teacher, some of them are starting to hate the teacher, and others tolerate him/her because they have to. Another stated that very few students like to study, and those damage the students who are interested. Other subjects stated that their classmates hate their teacher

because they do not do well in the subject. One subject stated that his/her classmates do not like the teacher because he/she gives them hard tasks. Another stated that during the English class, his/her classmates scream, fight, and cause disorder. However, the majority agree that their classmates' attitude towards the teacher is linked to their understanding and academic performance in the course.

In response to the fourteenth question, as to what the subjects think the teacher should do to motivate the students to study more, most of the subjects stated that the teacher should be more dynamic, make the class more exciting, and interesting to study for. Other subjects stated that the teacher should give them more work, call for the homework, and explain a little more. Some subjects stated that the teacher should give them easier tasks. Many subjects stated that the teacher should use more Spanish during the class. Some subjects stated that the teacher should be more patient with them, and be more creative. One subject stated that the teacher should dialogue more with those students, give them hopes for a better performance, and make the classes more cheerful, because in reality they (the classes) are very boring. Another subject stated that the teacher should experiment with other methodologies, and the students should find other methods of studying. However, the vast majority agreed that the teacher should use the first language (Spanish) more, when explaining the classes.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what were the subjects' final grades in the last bimester; the following information was revealed:

GRAPH 11



According to the data analysis eighteen percent (18%) of the subjects have failing grades, sixty-five percent (65%) of the subjects have borderline passing grades; and fifteen (15%) of the subjects have relatively high passing grades.

The second set of data analyzed was that provided by the questionnaire applied to the teacher who instructs the groups of Commerce tract on the afternoon schedule. In response to the first question, as to what tract the subject instructs, the subject works with the Commerce tract.

In response to the second question, as to how long the subject has been teaching the English subject in this tract in the Instituto Urracá, the subject has been teaching English in this school for five (5) years.

In response to the third question, as to whether the subject has worked with other tracts or not; the subject responded affirmatively, he/she stated that he/she has worked with the Science tract.

In response to the fourth question, as to which tract the subject prefers to work with, the subject claims to prefer to work with the Science tract because the students' demand for learning the language is higher

In response to the fifth question, as to what type of topics in English the subject teaches to this tract, the subject stated that he/she uses commercial writing (syntax), grammar, the parts of the letter, regular and irregular verbs, and so forth; because they are the topics suggested by the program, and the subject considers that they are necessary for this area of specialization.

In response to the sixth question, as to how the subject perceives the students' attitude towards the English subject, the subject perceives that the students like the

subject more or less, because they indicate a certain apathy towards the language, they consider it very difficult, and they feel it is not useful to them.

In response to the seventh question, as to how the subject perceives the students' attitudes towards him/her, the subject claims that the students like him/her, because there are students who have sought him/her to confide problems that they have that are not related to the course. The subject claims that his/her students trust him/her, and he/she tries his/her best to make them feel comfortable

In response to the eighth question, as to which is the instrument the subject uses the most frequently to evaluate the students, the following information has emerged: the instrument the subject uses the most is the written exam, and the instrument the subject uses least is laboratory (others).

In response to the ninth question, as to whether there are many failures among the groups the subject instructs, the following information has emerged: the subject claims that there are many failures among the groups that he/she instructs. Other than the students' apathy towards the language, the subject states that he/she would like to know why there are so many failures.

In response to the tenth question, as to how the students perceive the English course in terms of difficulty, according to the subject, the students find the English course difficult, that is how the students have expressed it.

In response to the eleventh question, as to what professional preparation (degrees) the subject has in the English language, the following information emerged: the subject has a Licenciatura (BA degree) in ELT, and is currently enrolled in a Masters Program in ESL at the Centro Regional Universitario de Veraguas – Universidad de Panamá.

In response to the twelfth question, as to whether the subject practices the English language or not, the subject claims to practice English with his/her students, through readings, through audio/visual activities, with his/her colleagues, and through e-mail.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to whether the subject considers that his/her students can communicate in the English language, the subject considers that his/her students communicate in the English language deficiently.

In response to the fourteenth question, as to why there are so many failures in English among the subjects' groups, the subject claims to not know why there are so many failures among the groups he/she instructs; however, he/she also claims that many students have said that it is because they do not like the English language.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what the subject considers can be done to avoid so many failures among the students of the tract he/she instructs, the subject states that first of all they need to be provided an environment that is comfortable, the programs of instruction of the English language and texts should be restructured, the teacher should be better prepared methodologically speaking, and the teacher should have a better attitude towards the students

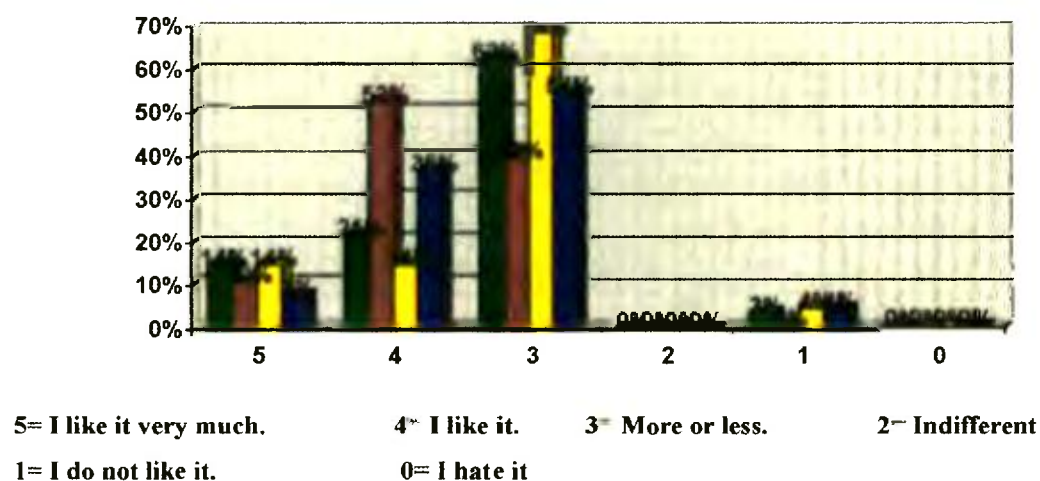
The next set of questions analyzed, were those pertaining to the students of the Commerce tract on the afternoon schedule. In response to the first question, as to what tract the subjects are studying in, one hundred and sixteen (116) students stated that they are in the Commerce tract.

In response to the second question as to whether the subjects like the English subject, the following information emerged:

TABLE 1

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
B5	29	4	14%	6	21%	18	62%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
B6	31	3	10%	16	52%	12	39%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B7	28	4	14%	4	14%	19	68%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%
B8	28	2	7%	10	36%	15	54%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%
Total	116	13	11%	36	31%	64	54%	0	0%	3	3%	0	0%

GRAPH 1



The average number of points (average attitude toward the English subject) is 3.00, which implies that the subjects are indifferent towards this subject.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: one subject stated that sometimes he/she finds the subject boring, because s/he is not an expert on the English language. Another stated that there are many features that he/she does not

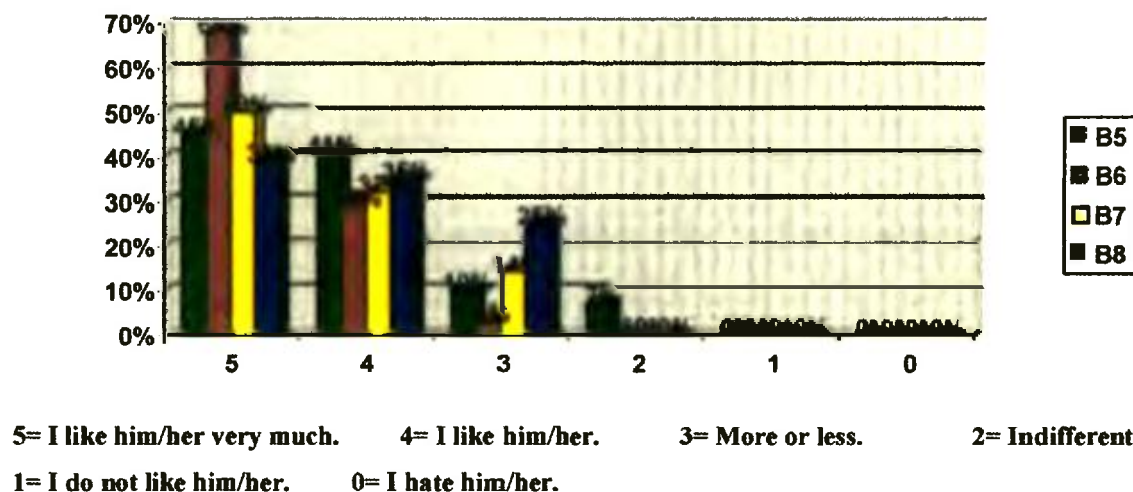
understand. One subject stated that even though he/she cannot speak English, and does not understand the structures, he/she would like to learn. Another stated that the teacher explains well, and he/she and his/her classmates like the way the teacher evaluates them. Some subjects stated that even though they do not understand the English language, they enjoy the subject. One subject stated that he/she tries hard to understand the language, but can not seem to achieve it. Another, stated that he/she does not understand the pronunciation, does not practice it, and, therefore, does not perform well or like this subject. However, the majority of the subjects agreed that English is an important subject, especially to their field of study, so they have had to grow accustomed to learning the language.

In response to the third question, as to whether the subjects like their English teacher, the following information emerged

TABLE 2

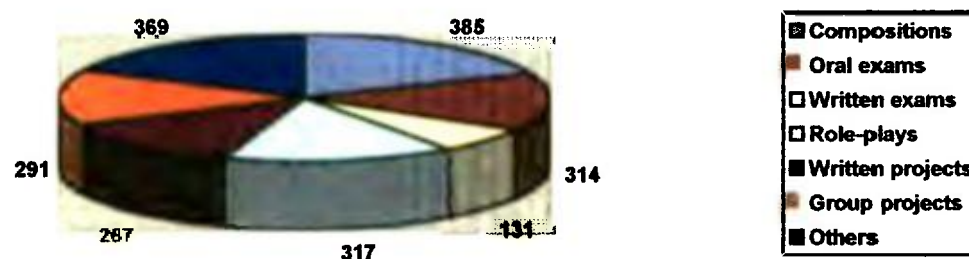
Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
B5	29	13	45%	12	41%	3	10%	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%
B6	31	21	68%	9	29%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B7	28	14	50%	9	32%	4	14%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B8	28	11	39%	10	35%	7	25%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	116	59	51%	40	34%	15	13%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 2



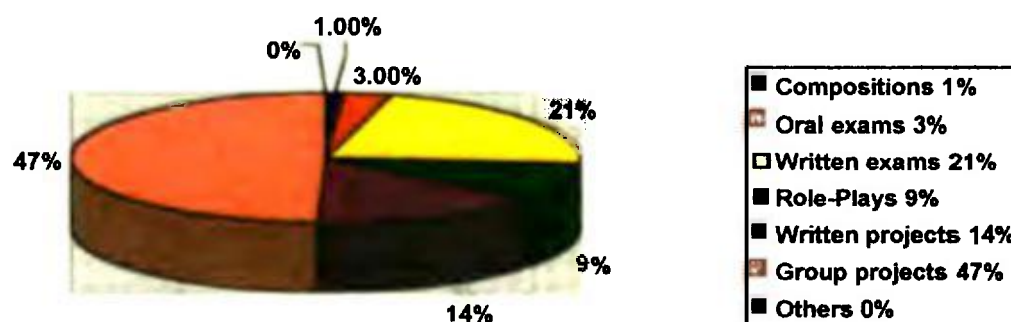
The average number of points (average attitude towards the teacher) is 4.00, which implies that the subjects like their teacher. Some of the reasons stated by the subjects are as follows: one subject stated that the teacher worries about the performance of the students and, therefore, tries very hard to help them to understand. Another stated that the teacher is very dynamic. One subject stated that the teacher explains well, is very kind, and honestly helps them to move along in the subject. Another subject stated that the teacher is very explicit in her/his ways, (s)he is sincere when (s)he speaks; and added that (s)he admires his/her teacher very much. One subject stated that the teacher is very understanding. Another stated that (s)he likes the teacher because (s)he expresses him/herself very well, selects very interesting topics, and offers his/her students very clear and precise information, and is a very caring and persuasive person.

In response to the fourth question, as to which is the form of evaluation the teacher most uses to test her students' performance in the English subject, the following emerged.

GRAPH 3

According to the subjects, the form of evaluation most used by the teacher is by means of written examinations, with an average of 131 points; and the form of evaluation least used by the teacher is compositions, with an average of 385 points.

In response to the fifth question, as to which one of the previously mentioned forms of evaluation do the subjects prefer. The following information emerged:

GRAPH 4

Most of the subjects stated that they prefer group projects because they are allowed to share opinions and ideas to make better projects, and others, because they can speak to their classmates in Spanish. Other subjects stated that it is more practical, and they can cooperate with one another. One subject stated that students can share work, and

discuss the topic with the rest of the group. Another stated that those who understand better can help those who do not, with the guidance of the teacher.

Those students who prefer written exams, stated as reasons that they understand better what they have to do. Some stated that they have more time to think, and verify their answers to make passing grades. Other subjects stated that they prepare better for this form of evaluation, because they are able to make use of their memory. One subject stated that he/she likes written tests because he/she can make use of the English/Spanish dictionary, and that way understand what the teacher is asking for. Another stated that what usually appears on written exams is the same that is taught during the lessons, and this way it is easier to study.

Those subjects who prefer written projects, gave as reasons that they are allowed to use their English/Spanish dictionaries to understand better. One subject stated that he/she finds it exciting to be able to investigate. Another stated that it is the best way to develop knowledge, not only in the area of English, but in all other areas as well. One subject stated that with this activity the students make their grades individually, by themselves, contrary to group projects in which one student does all the work, and the others do nothing. Another subject stated that the students learn more when working on written projects. Other subjects stated that students have the opportunity to put their minds to work, instead of remaining in the “inertia”. Another stated that he/she is able to practice reading, writing, and pronouncing in English by this means.

Those subjects who prefer role-plays, gave as reasons that these acts reflect much of the reality that the world is living. One subject stated that role-plays are a way of communicating, and making oneself heard. Another subject stated that through role-playing, students express their creativity and practice their pronunciation. Others stated that role-playing is the activity that reveals what abilities students have. Others stated that they are able to relax their minds, and they are not doing what they usually do, which

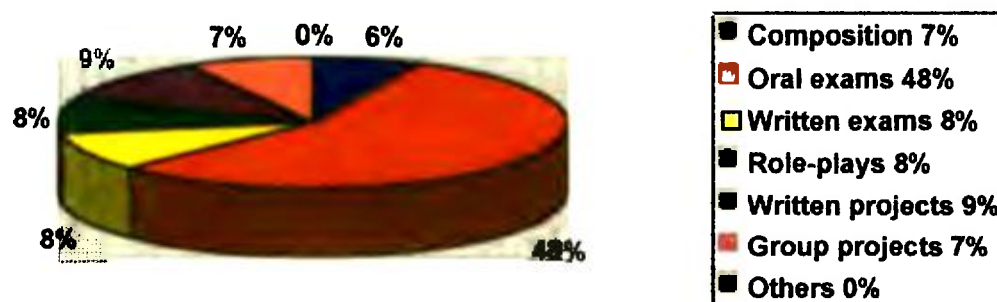
is boring; and acting in English gives them the facility of moving faster and practicing the language.

Those subjects who prefer oral exams, stated as reasons that it is through this method of evaluation that students learn to develop communication strategies. One subject stated that he/she considers that through this technique students learn to speak in front of an audience in a competent and professional manner.

Those students who prefer compositions did not state any reasons.

In response to the sixth question, as to which of the previously mentioned forms of evaluation do the subjects like the least, and why? The following information emerged:

GRAPH 5



The largest percentage of subjects, which is 48%, dislikes oral exams as a form of evaluation, while the lowest rated form evaluation was “Others”, which constituted 0% of subject votes, followed by compositions and group projects, which constituted 7% of subject votes.

Regarding compositions, some subjects stated that they do not like them because they have to make up the content, and they are not prepared for this type of work. Other subjects stated that a lot of imagination is required for this type of activity, and they do not have much imagination.

With regard to oral exams, one subject stated that he/she does not like this activity because if he/she forgets one word, he/she gets a lower point average. Another stated that when he/she is spoken to in English, he/she becomes confused. Some subjects stated that they become nervous, and forget everything they wanted to say. One subject stated that he/she does not like this type of evaluation because the teacher asks a question, and the subjects have to respond immediately, and have no time to think. Some subjects stated that they do not like to step up to the front of the class and speak in English because they feel embarrassed and make too many mistakes. One subject claims that this form of evaluation gives less facility point and grade wise. Another stated that many of them do not know the pronunciation of many words, and that makes them nervous and tongue tied. One subject stated that oral exams are very complicated because they involve a lot of memory, and students generally do badly on this type of evaluation. Another stated that it bothers him/her to not know the pronunciation of the words. Another stated that he/she is very unsure of him/herself, and what he/she is going to say. One other subject stated that every answer to the teacher's questions has to be quick, and there is no time to think. However, most of the subjects agreed that they do not like oral exams because it makes them nervous to have to speak in English.

With regard to written exams, one subject stated that he/she does not like them because they are like puzzles that he/she has to put together. Other subjects stated that sometimes they do not understand the material; and, as much as they practice, they always make bad grades. One subject stated that he/she does not understand English or anything the teacher writes on the test sheet.

With regard to role-plays, one subject stated that the group(s) he/she usually works with do not know how to coordinate the activity, and they do not know how to interpret their roles. Another stated that too much has to be memorized. One subject complained that role-plays are very boring. Another subject stated that English pronunciation is very difficult for him/her, and he/she feels embarrassed to perform. One subject stated that there are too many students who think they are “smarter”, and leave everything up to one or two students, while they do nothing. Some subjects stated that they can not pronounce English well. Others stated that they become nervous, and forget their lines. One subject stated that he/she does not know how to act, and does not have a good tone of voice.

With regard to written projects, according to one subject, it is hard for him/her to organize his/her ideas in English, and it is equally hard for him/her to express him/herself in the language. Another subject stated that written projects are boring. Another subject stated that written projects are very little dynamic.

With regard to group projects, most of the subjects agreed that only one or two students do the work while the rest do nothing, and make the same grade. One subject added that one learns from what one does oneself, and when people work in groups some people share knowledge, while most have nothing to share. Another subject stated that he/she is accustomed to doing everything by him/herself. One subject stated that he/she does not consider him/herself selfish, however, he/she does not like group projects because not everyone has the same level of solidarity.

With regard to other forms of evaluation, one subject stated that he/she does not like “participation”, because most of the time he/she does not understand what the teacher says, so he/she is not willing to participate

In response to the seventh question, as to whether there many failures in the subjects' classroom, and why they think there are so many failures; the following emerged

Most of the subjects answered affirmatively, and added that the reason for these failures is that the teacher does not explain well enough; others, that they do not practice. However, the majority of the students stated that their classmates do not pay attention during classes, do not study or work at home, and have no interest at all in the subject.

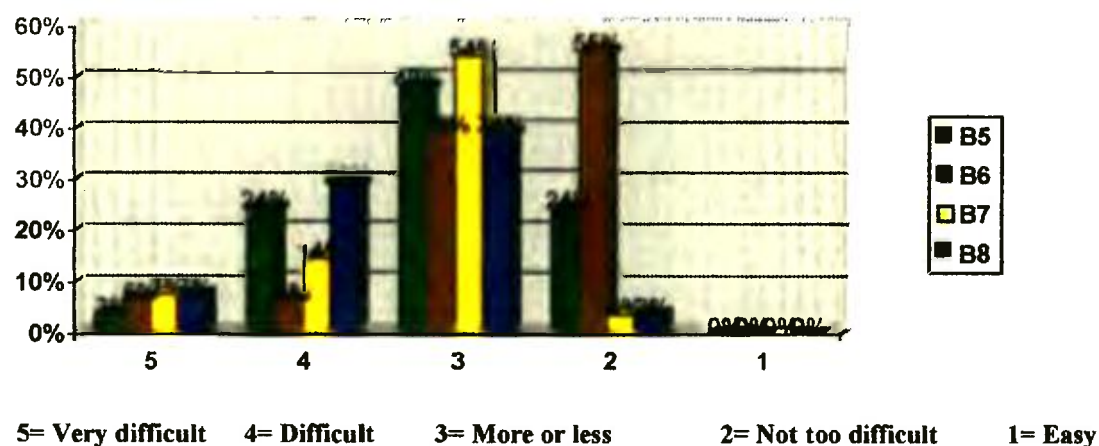
In response to the eighth question, as to what the subjects consider can be done to avoid students from failing in the English subject, some subjects stated that the topics should be explained in such a way that the students are able to understand; students should ask questions when they are given the opportunity to clarify doubts, and they should participate more in class by going to the whiteboard. Others stated the teacher should give them more group work, and less oral work. One subject stated that the teacher should explain to them how to learn better and faster, because they would like to speak in English. One subject stated that, not much can actually be done, because it all depends on the interest of the students, if a student is not interested then nothing can be done for that student. Another subject stated that the students should be helped to understand, because they do want to learn, but they simply do not understand. One subject stated that the teacher should take it easier, go over the topics at a slower pace, since they are not "gringos", and they need to learn the pronunciation of the words. Some subjects stated that, if the students do not want to fail, they should study and practice more, because they are very lazy. Others stated that the Instituto Urracá should have more English teachers, more computer courses in English, and more hours dedicated to the English subject.

In response to the ninth question, as to how difficult the students find the English subject to be, and why; the following information emerged:

TABLE 3

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
B5	29	1	3%	7	24%	14	48%	7	24%	0	0%
B6	31	2	6%	2	6%	12	39%	17	55%	0	0%
B7	28	2	7%	4	14%	15	54%	7	3%	0	0%
B8	28	2	7%	8	29%	11	39%	7	3%	0	0%
Total	116	7	6%	21	18%	52	45%	38	21%	0	0%

GRAPH 7



The average number of points (average difficulty of the English subject) is 2.40 which implies that the subject is not perceived by the students as being very difficult.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: one subject stated that English is a “pretty” subject, because if you have knowledge in this area, you can get a decent job. Another stated that if students paid a little more attention, they would find the subject very easy. One subject stated that English requires a lot of practice. Another stated that those students, who find this subject difficult, do so because they do not practice, do not pay attention, and simply are not interested. On the other

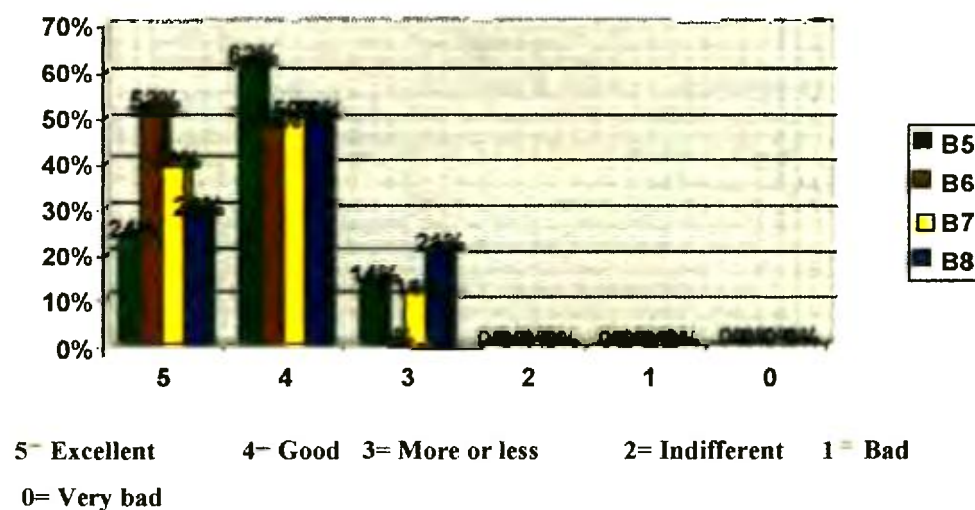
hand, those students who stated that English is difficult or very difficult, did so because they do not understand, and because English is a language that they are not used to, therefore they do not like it.

In response to the tenth question, as to how the subjects classify the attitude of their teacher towards them, the following information emerged:

TABLE 4

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
B5	29	7	24%	18	62%	4	14%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B6	31	16	52%	15	48%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B7	28	11	39%	14	50%	3	11%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B8	28	8	29%	14	50%	6	21%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	116	42	36%	61	53%	13	12%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 8



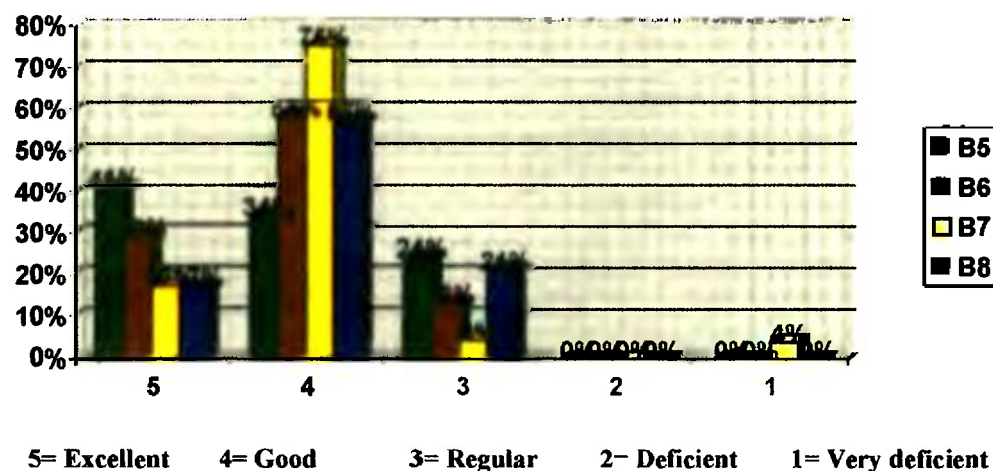
The average number of points (average attitude of the teacher towards the students) is of 4.00, which implies that the teacher's attitude is perceived by the students as being "good". Clearly, the responses to this question were positive.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects are as follows: one subject stated that the teacher is nice because (s)he gives his/her students opportunities to make better grades when they fail. Another stated that the teacher is a professional, and demonstrates her/his professional attitude and knowledge with them. One subject stated that the teacher has a positive attitude, because he/she has no preference for any particular students, he/she treats everyone equally. Another stated that the teacher concerns her/himself with her/his students' grades. One subject stated that the teachers advises them, and helps them when they have problems. Another subject stated that the teacher has patience, which is an important quality that all teachers should have.

In response to the eleventh question, as to how the subjects would evaluate the teaching preparation of the professor to instruct the English language; the following information emerged.

TABLE 5

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
B5	29	12	41%	10	34%	7	27%	0	0%	0	0%
B6	31	9	29%	18	58%	4	13%	0	0%	0	0%
B7	28	5	17%	21	75%	1	4%	0	0%	1	4%
B8	28	5	17%	16	57%	6	21%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	116	31	26%	65	56%	18	16%	0	0%	1	1%

GRAPH 9

The average number of points (teaching preparation of the professor) is 4.06, which implies that the teacher's methodological teaching preparation is perceived by the students as "good". Clearly, all the responses were positive.

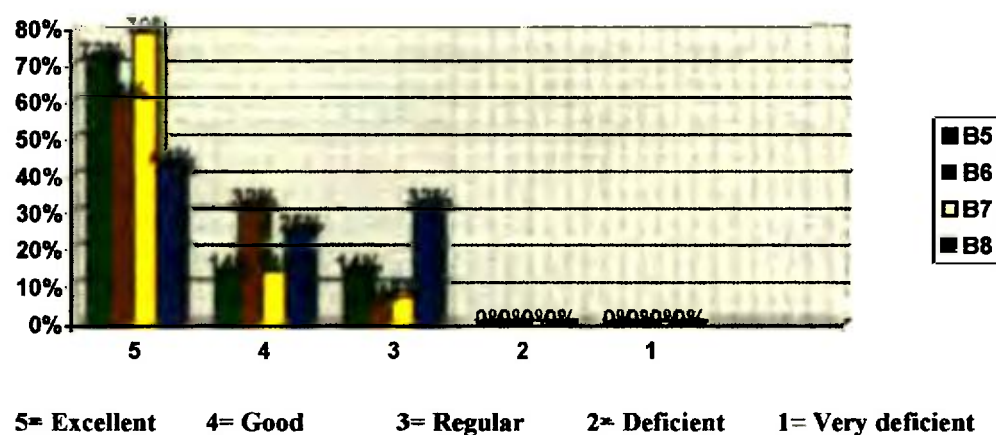
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects are as follows: one subject stated that what (s)he likes most about the teacher's methodology is when he/she assigns them investigations, dialogues, and translations. Another stated that if the teacher's methodology were deficient, no student would pass the subject. Another subject stated that the teacher has a good preparation because he/she explains in Spanish sometimes. One subject stated that the teacher's methodology is very deficient because he/she makes them memorize all the verbs, and makes them memorize all the material he/she teaches. However, most of the subjects agree that the teacher explains very well, and does all he/she can to get them to understand his/her classes.

In response to the twelfth question, as to whether the subjects think that their teacher masters the English language or not; the following information emerged:

TABLE 6

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
B5	29	21	72%	4	14%	4	14%	0	0%	0	0%
B6	31	19	61%	10	32%	2	6%	0	0%	0	0%
B7	28	22	79%	4	14%	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%
B8	28	12	43%	7	25%	9	32%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	116	74	64%	25	21%	17	15%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 10



The average number of points (teachers mastering of the English language) is 4.49, which implies that the students perceive the teacher's mastering of the English language as "good", almost "excellent".

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects, are as follows: one student stated that sometimes he/she is under the impression that the teacher is confused, and doesn't know the words in English. Another stated that the teacher has an excellent mastery of the English language, because he/she combines English with Spanish correctly (?). Another added that not only does the teacher speak English correctly, he/she translates from English to Spanish perfectly so the students can understand. One subject

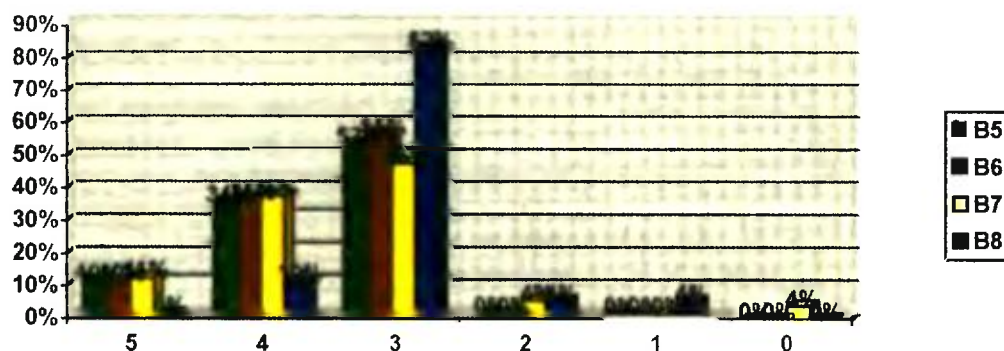
stated that the teacher has to be fluent in the English language or else he/she would not be working in the Instituto Urracá. Another subject stated that the teacher masters the language on a “regular” basis, because he/she speaks too much Spanish, when he/she should be speaking more English. However, most of the subjects stated that the teacher is very fluent in the English language because he/she explains everything in English, although he/she translates afterwards; he/she expresses her/himself well in English; his/her conversations in class are in English; and his/her pronunciation seems very adequate.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to how the subjects would classify the attitudes of their classmates towards the teacher; the following information emerged:

TABLE 7

Group	Nº	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
B5	29	3	10%	10	34%	15	52%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B6	31	3	10%	11	35%	17	55%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
B7	28	3	11%	10	36%	13	46%	1	4%	0	0%	1	4%
B8	28	0	0%	3	10%	23	82%	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
Total	116	9	6%	34	29%	68	59%	2	2%	1	1%	1	1%

GRAPH 10



The average number of points (average attitude of the students towards their English teacher) is 3.36, which implies that the subjects perceive the attitude of their classmates towards their teacher is somewhat positive.

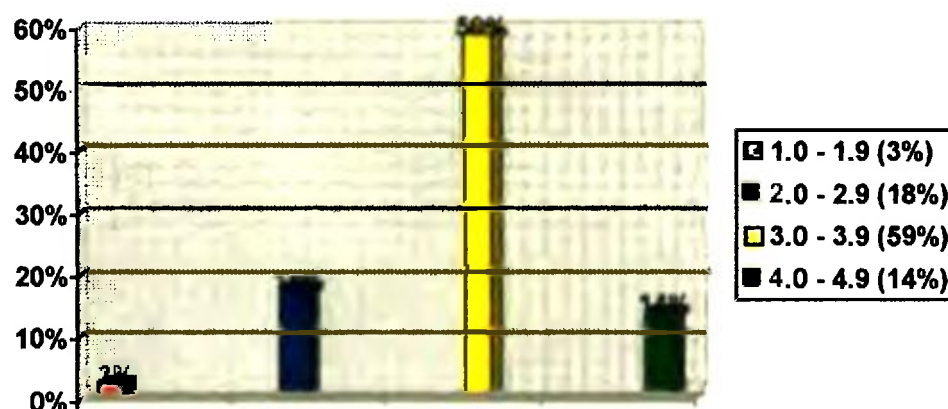
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: one subject stated that most of the students have a very limited knowledge and performance in the English subject, so they do not feel the need to behave during the class. Another stated that since most of the students are failing a lot in the subject, they do not like the teacher that much. One stated that sometimes, while the teacher is explaining the class, there are students who are talking about other matters, but that is common in every school. Another subject stated that sometimes students are very rude, and do not respect the teacher. One subject added that he/she and his/her classmates make a lot of noise. However, most of the students agree that their classmates do not pay attention during the lessons, and spend most of their time distracting other students from paying attention to the class

In response to the fourteenth question, as to what the subjects think that the English teacher should do to motivate his/her students to make better grades; the following information emerged. One subject stated that his/her classmates should be advised to study more. Another stated that the grades should be drawn from the lesson material that was better understood by the students. One subject stated that his/her classmates should change their learning strategies. Another stated that the teacher should make the classes more dynamic and fun. One student stated that there should be more "group work", that way students will make better grades. Another subject stated that the teacher should be more explicit with the work he/she assigns. One subject stated that the teacher should try to get along better with the students, and make things easier for them. One other stated, that the teacher should change his/her methodology. Another stated that the teacher should pay more attention to the students' problems. One subject suggested more written projects, and homework should be evaluated. However, one subject stated that the teacher should stop being so flexible with the students. Another

subject stated that the teacher should speak more Spanish, give the students more time to do their work, and he/she should explain the lesson two or maybe three times. Some students stated that, when the teacher asks if everything is understood, the students should not sit in their chairs with their mouths shut; they should express their doubts.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what were the subjects' final grades in the last bimester of classes; the following information emerged:

GRAPH 11



The percentage of failures among the afternoon groups in of the Commerce tract is 21%, while the percentage of borderline passing grades is 59%, and the percentage of high passing grades is 14%. One subject did not respond to the question.

The fifth set of data analyzed was that provided by the questionnaire administered to the teacher who instructs the Publicity (Commerce) tract on the afternoon schedule. In response to the first question, the subject instructs the relatively new branch of the Commerce tract denominated Publicity, on the afternoon schedule.

In responses to the second question, as to how long the teacher has been teaching English in this tract in the Instituto Urracá, the subject stated that he/she has been teaching English in the Instituto Urracá for two (years).

In response to the third question, as to whether the subject has taught other tracts or not, the subject stated that he/she has taught in the Science tract, and other technical areas

In response to the fourth question, as to which of these tracts the subject prefers to instruct, the subject stated that he/she prefers to instruct in the Science tract because the students in this tract are more critical and participate more.

In response to the fifth question, as to what type of topics the subject usually teaches to this tract, the subject stated that he/she teaches the students to read food labels, employs readings on using technology in daily jobs, basic grammar structures, and others; because this is what the students show more interest in, later, at the university level.

In response to the sixth question, as to how the subject perceives the attitudes of his/her students towards the English subject; the subject stated that the students like it because it is something new for them

In response to the seventh question, as to how the subject perceives the attitude of his/her students towards him/her; the subject stated that his/her students like him/her more or less; he/she claims that it is something very hard to detect in a general way.

In response to the eighth question, as to what type of instrument the subject uses to evaluate his/her subject; the subject stated that the instrument he/she uses the most is the written exam, and the instrument he/she uses least is role-play.

In response to the ninth question, as to whether there are many failures among the subject's students; the subject claims there are few failures among his/her students because he/she tends to select the material to facilitate their understanding.

In response to the tenth question, as to how the subjects' students perceive the degree of difficulty of the English course; the subject claims that his/her students find English to be a difficult course because they can not seem to externalize the knowledge they obtain in a fluent manner.

In response to the eleventh question, as to what professional preparation (degrees) the subject has, the subject stated that he/she has a Licenciatura in English (BA) from the Universidad de Panamá, and is currently enrolled in a Masters Program in ESL in the Centro Regional Universitario de Veraguas - Universidad de Panamá.

In response to the twelfth question, as to whether the subject practices the English language or not; the subject answered positively, and stated that he/she practices English with his/her students, by means of readings, and with his/her colleagues.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to whether the subject considers that his/her students can communicate in the English language; the subject stated that his/her students can communicate in English in a "regular" or "more or less" manner.

In response to the fourteenth question, as to why there are so many failures in the English course, according to the subject's opinion; the subject claims that it may have to do with the low degree of acceptance the students have towards their teachers.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what the subjects suggest can be done to help motivate the students to study more for the English course; the subjects suggests that the students should be spoken to in a clear manner, and they should be reminded of their professional and future goals, and how important English is to accomplish these goals

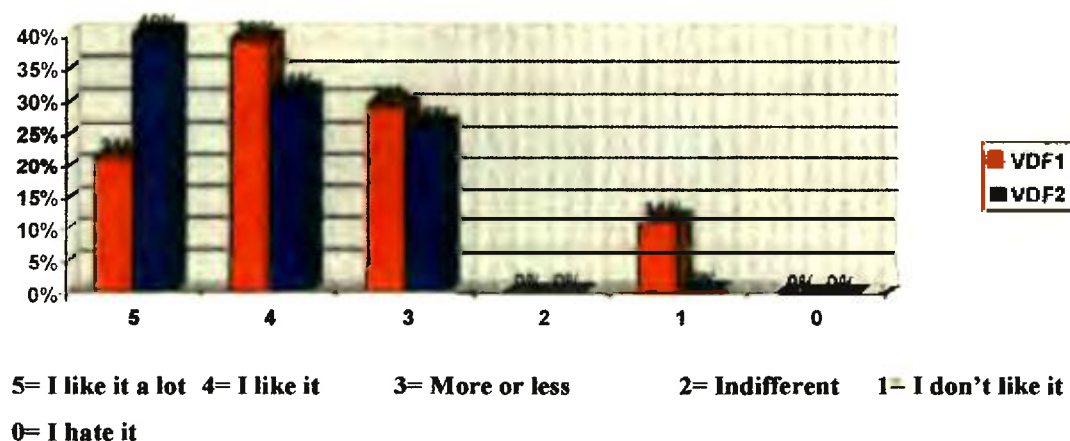
The sixth set of data analyzed was that provided by the questionnaires applied to the Publicity(Commerce) tract on the afternoon schedule. In response to the first question, there are sixty-three students in the Publicity tract.

In response to the second question as to whether the subjects like the English subject or not, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 1

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VDF1	28	6	21%	11	39%	8	29%	0	0%	3	11%	0	0%
VDF2	35	14	40%	11	31%	9	26%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	63	20	31%	22	35%	17	28%	0	0%	3	6%	0	0%

GRAPH 1



The average number of points (average attitude of the subjects towards the English course) is 3.84, which implies that the subjects like the course.

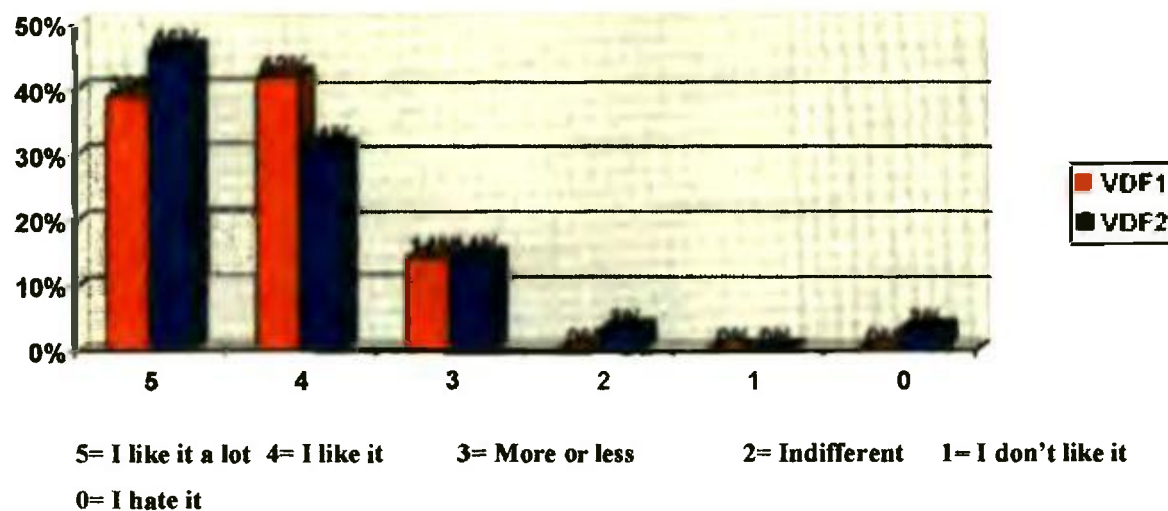
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: some subjects stated that they would like to learn English because it will help them in the future when it comes to the professions they will elect. Others like English because they claim that it is very much used worldwide, and it is the official language of Globalization. One subject stated that he/she likes English because he/she is studious and has learned to work and express him/herself fairly well in this language. Another subject stated that he/she likes languages, and is considering learning French and any other language he/she can. However, there are subjects who consider English complicated, and for this reason they do not like the course as much.

In response to the third question, as to whether or not they like their English teacher, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 2

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VDF1	28	11	39%	12	42%	4	14%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0
VDF2	35	16	46%	11	31%	5	14%	1	3%	0	0%	1	3%
Total	63	27	43%	23	37%	9	14%	1	2%	0	0%	1	2%

GRAPH 2

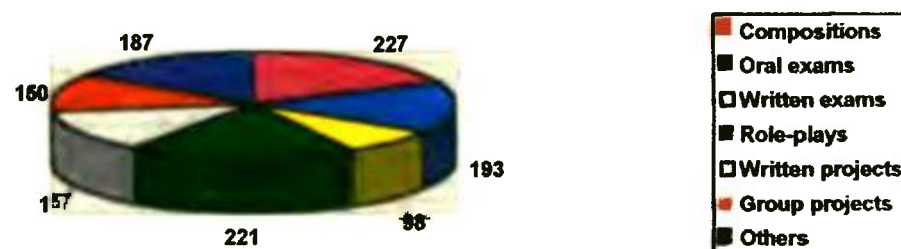


The average number of points (average attitude of the subjects towards the teacher) is 4.06, which implies that the subjects like their English teacher.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: most of the subjects like their teacher because he/she is friendly, considerate, kind, fun; he/she explains well; they understand him/her; he/she makes his/her class fun; he/she is very talkative; he/she helps them, and understands them. Some subjects claim to like the subject because of the teacher; they say that he/she makes the class worthwhile. Furthermore, they claim that the teacher is patient, easygoing and well-prepared.

In response to the fourth question as to which is the form of evaluation most employed by the teacher to grade the students, the following information has emerged:

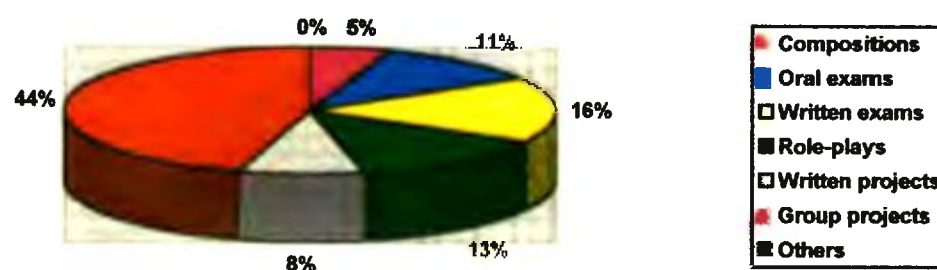
GRAPH 3



According to the data, the activity most employed for evaluation is that of written exams, with an average of 98 points; while the activity used less for evaluation is that of composition, with an average of 227 points.

In response to the fifth question, as to which one of these activities the subjects prefer the most, the following information has emerged:

GRAPH 4



Three (3) subjects prefer compositions because they consider that they do better and have more ability to develop them.

Seven (7) subjects prefer oral exams because they claim that the only way to learn a language is by speaking it; and by expressing themselves orally, they can put into practice all of the grammatical structures they learn in class.

Ten (10) subjects prefer written exams because they have more time to analyze their answers; they can make use of memorization; and they can cheat.

Eight (8) subjects prefer role-plays because they can work with other students, use their imagination, be funny, present a message to the rest of the class, make use of what they learn in the course, and communicate in English.

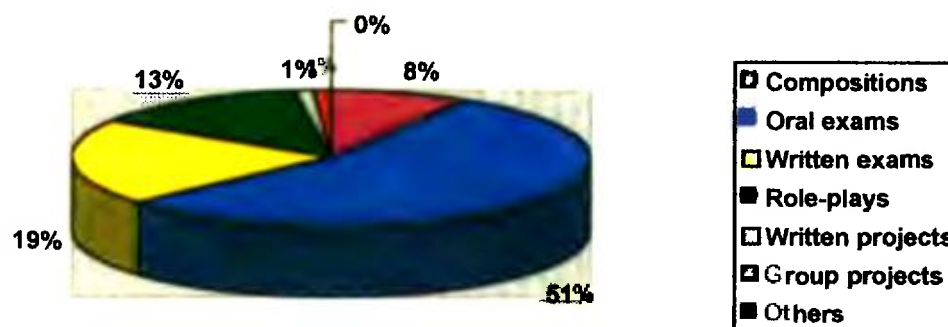
Five (5) subjects prefer written projects because they like to investigate; they can do their work at home with the help of the dictionary; and they have the option of paying other people to do their work if they do not want to do it themselves.

Twenty-eight (28) subjects prefer group projects because they can share ideas, help one another, talk in the process, have fun, and consult with one another about what they are going to do.

Two (2) subjects did not respond to this question.

In response to the sixth question, as to which of these activities the subjects dislike, the following information has emerged:

GRAPH 5



Five (5) subjects claim to dislike compositions because they have terrible orthography, and they do not have a vast vocabulary or knowledge of grammatical structures or syntax.

Thirty-two (32) subjects dislike oral exams because they claim to have bad pronunciation, and lack of coherence; they have shortage of vocabulary; they are afraid of making mistakes in front of an audience, and they have problems with grammar.

Twelve (12) subjects dislike written exams because they find them boring; these exams require too much memorization, and they learn only for the test, after that, they forget everything.

Eight (8) subjects dislike role-plays because they are ashamed to act; they are not creative; they forget their parts; they have bad intonation and pronunciation; and they have a problem to get their classmates to understand the message.

One (1) subject dislikes written projects because they are boring.

One (1) subject dislikes group projects because he/she ends up doing all the work.

Four (4) subjects did not respond.

In response to the seventh question, as to whether there are many failures in the English class, the following information has emerged: the subjects claim that there are not many failures in their class, they stated that the teacher does not give the students the chance to fail. One subject stated that there is only one failure in his/her class, and claims this failure is due to fact that his/her classmate is a disorderly and disorganized person. Some subjects stated that there are not many failures because the students enjoy their English classes, and they understand. Others stated that if there are one or two failures it is to say too much, and those failures are due to the fact that those students do not bother to read or prepare for class.

In response to the eighth question, as to what the subjects suggest can be done so that their classmates will not fail in the English course: most subjects suggest that the only thing that can be done is that each student create a sense of honesty, responsibility, and learn to pay more attention to studying and for preparing for class. Others suggest students should dedicate more time and practice to the course. Others added that students

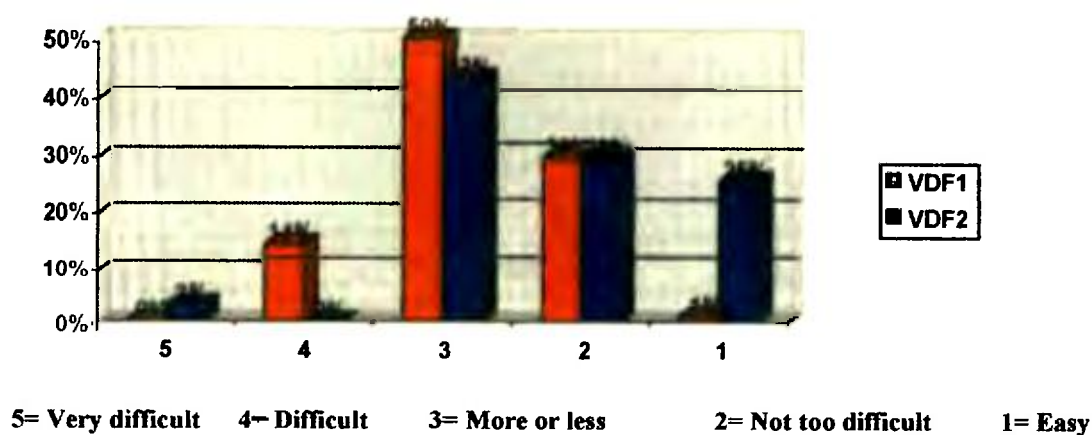
should organize themselves and their study time better; they should find new learning strategies and make a greater effort in raising their grades.

In response to the ninth question, as to how difficult the subjects perceive the English course to be, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 3

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VDF1	28	0	0%	4	14%	14	50%	8	29%	1	1%
VDF2	35	1	3%	0	0%	15	43%	10	29%	9	25%
Total	63	1	1%	0	7%	29	47%	18	29%	10	13%

GRAPH 6



The average number of points (average grade of difficulty of the English subject) is 2.44, which implies that the subjects perceive the course as not being difficult.

Some of the explanations offered by the subjects were as follows: most of the subjects claim that the course is not very hard because they have a good teacher who

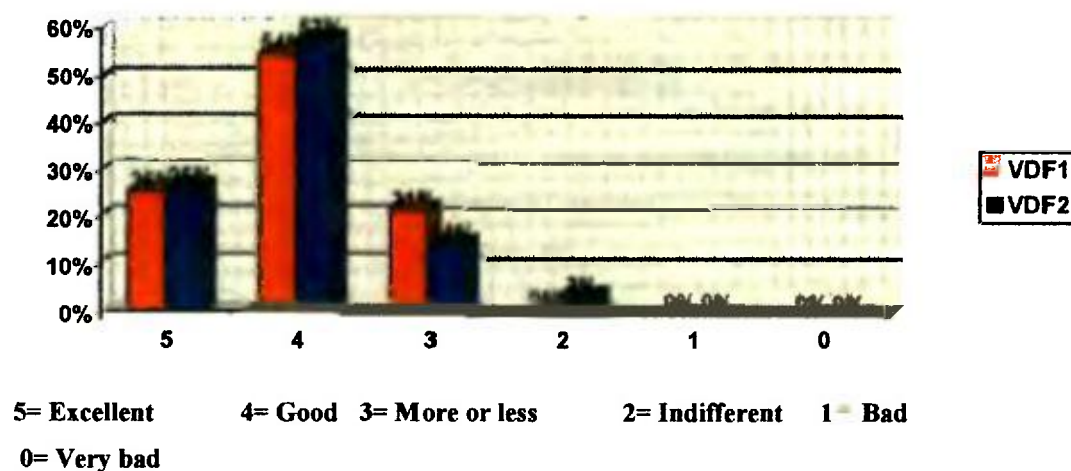
knows how to explain in such a way that they can understand him/her. However, there are those subjects who claim that what they find most difficult are those features of the language that have to do with speech, such as intonation, pronunciation, coherence, and so on; the written features are not that difficult.

In response to the tenth question, as to how the subjects perceive the teacher's attitude towards them, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 4

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VDF1	28	7	25%	15	54%	6	21%	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
VDF2	35	9	26%	20	57%	5	14%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	63	16	26%	35	56%	11	17%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 7



The average number of points (average attitude of the teacher towards the students) is 4.04, which implies that the subjects perceive the teacher's attitude as good.

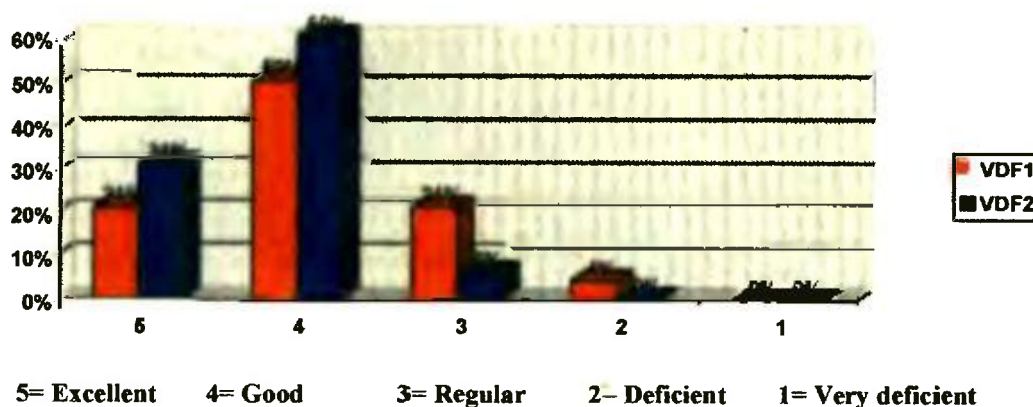
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follow: most of the subjects claim that the teacher treats them with respect, appreciation, he/she shares his/her sense of humor with them. Some added that the teacher is always in a good mood. Others added that the teacher understands them.

In response to the eleventh question, as to how the subjects perceive the teacher's preparation in methodology of instruction of the English language, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 5

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VDF1	28	6	21%	14	50%	6	21%	1	4%	0	0%
VDF2	35	11	31%	21	60%	2	6%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	63	17	26%	35	55%	8	14%	1	2%	0	0%

GRAPH 8



The average number of points (average preparation of the teacher in methodology of instruction of the English language) is of 4.01, which implies that the subjects perceive the teacher's methodological preparation as good.

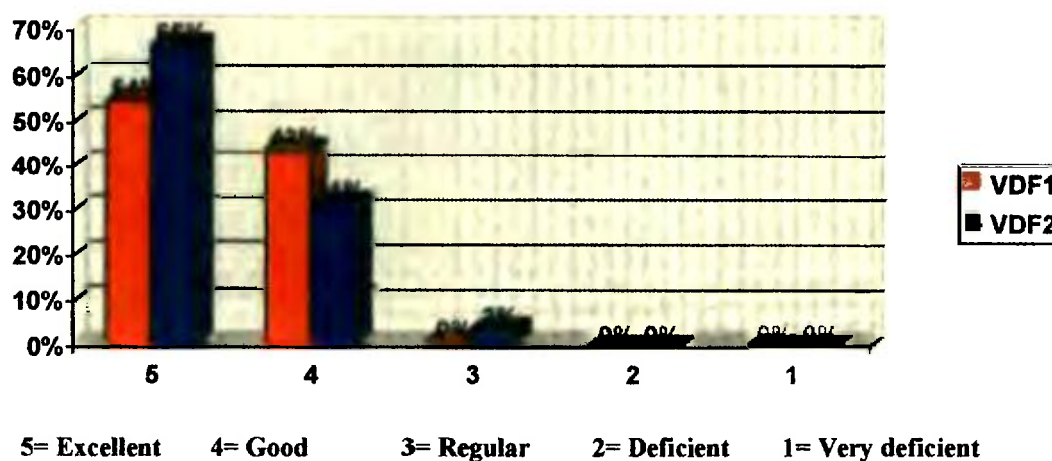
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: most of the subjects claim the teacher is well-prepared. One subject wrote “the teacher is a constructivist”. Some subjects stated that the teacher has a dynamic methodology, the classes are always fun and interesting; there is a lot of communication, and the teacher is never dull.

In response to the twelfth question, as to how the subjects perceive the teacher’s mastery of the English language, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 6

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VDF1	28	15	54%	12	43%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VDF2	35	23	66%	11	31%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	63	38	60%	23	37%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 9



The average number of points (average mastery of the English language by the teacher) is 4.52, which implies that some subjects perceive the teacher as having an

excellent mastery of the English language, and others perceive him/her as having a good mastery of the English language.

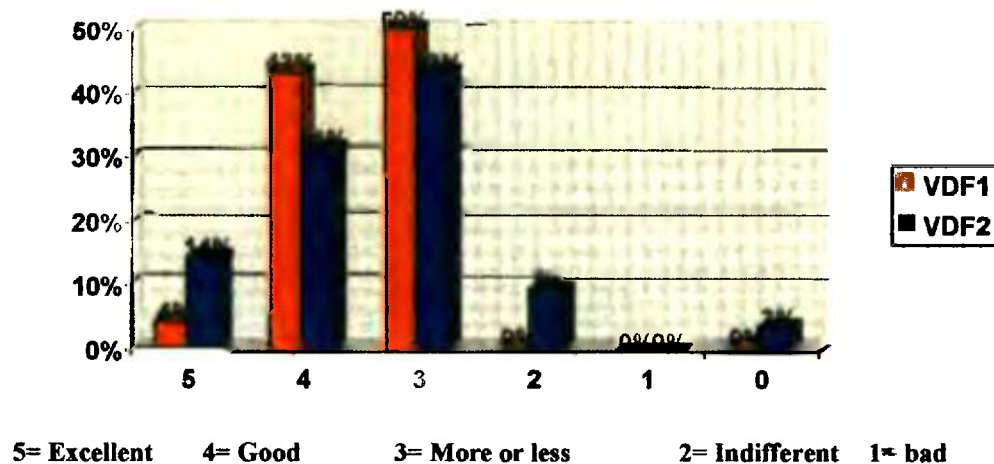
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects are as follow: some subject claim that the teacher masters the language because he/she speaks to them and they do not understand. Others added that the teacher speaks well, but very fast. Some stated that the teacher speaks well, however, not excellent. Others claim that the teacher can express him/herself well in English.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to how the subjects perceive the attitudes of their classmates towards the teacher, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 7

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VDF1	28	1	4%	12	43%	14	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VDF2	35	5	14%	11	31%	15	43%	3	9%	0	0%	1	3%
Total	63	6	9%	23	37%	29	71%	3	5%	0	0%	1	1%

GRAPH 10



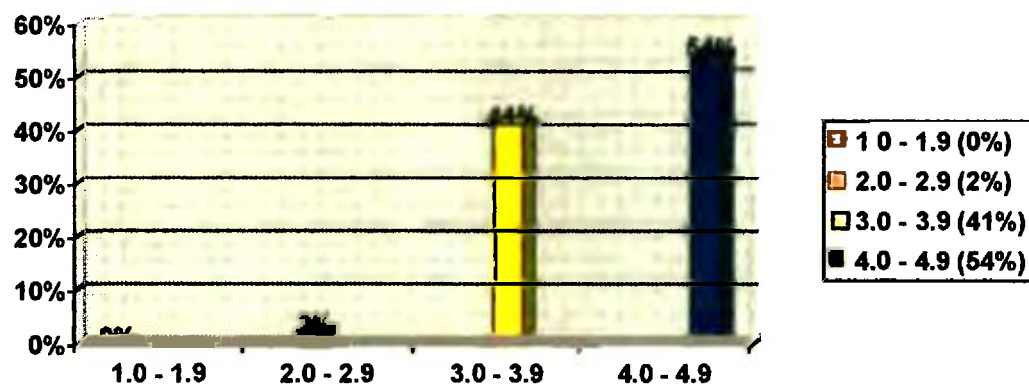
The average number of points (average attitude of the students towards the teacher) is 3.41, which implies that the subjects perceive their classmates' attitudes towards the teacher as regular.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: most of the subjects claim that their classmates know when to behave, and know when to play around; they claim that the teacher has control over the discipline of the group, and for this reason there are never any serious disciplinary problems. However, there are some subjects who claim that most of the time their classmates take advantage of the fact that the teacher has a funny and easygoing personality to misbehave and cause disorder in class.

In response to the fourteenth question, as to what the subject suggests the teacher should do to avoid that their classmates fail in the English subject, the following information has emerged: one subject suggested that the teacher be more strict, and make a clearer job of explaining the class, instead of trying to be humorous. Some subjects suggested that the teacher should use more drama as activities for evaluation. Others suggested that the teacher should talk to them more about how bad the financial situation is in Panama, and how essential English is in every professional field. However, most agree that it is not in the hands of the teacher whether the students pass or not, it is in their own hands.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what were the subjects' final grades in the last bimester of classes; the following information emerged:

GRAPH 11



According to the data, 2% of the subjects of the Publicity tract on the afternoon schedule have failing grades (2.0 – 2.9); however, 41% of the subjects have borderline passing grades (3.0 – 3.9), while 54% of the subjects have relatively high grades (4.0 – 4.9). Two subjects did not respond to the question.

The seventh set of data analyzed was that provided by the questionnaire applied to the teacher who instructs the students of the Letters tract on the morning schedule. In response to the first question, as to what tract does the subject instruct; the subject instructs the students of the V year Letters tract on the morning schedule.

In response to the second question, as to how many years the subject has been teaching English in this tract in the Insituto Urracá; the subject stated that he/she has been teaching in this tract for eleven (11) years.

In response to the third question, as to whether the subject has worked in any other tracts; the subject answered affirmatively, he/she has worked in the Science tract, Commerce tract, and Junior-high school.

In response to the fourth question, as to in which of these tracts the subject prefers to work; the subject stated that he/she prefers to work with the Science tract, because in

his/her opinion the students of this tract have a better sense of responsibility, they pay more attention, are more interested and take more pride in studying.

In response to the fifth question, as to what type of topics the subject teaches in his/her groups, the subject stated that he/she teaches the groups grammar, vocabulary, and readings.

In response to the sixth question, as to how the subject perceives his/her students attitude towards the course; the subject stated that the students like the course, because of the manner in which the teacher projects the language in the classroom.

In response to the seventh question, as to how the teacher perceives the attitude of the students towards him/her; the teacher claims that the students like him/her, because in the time that he/she has spent with them he/she has tried to teach them, and not repress them

In response to the eighth question, as to which type of instrument the subject uses the most to evaluate the students; the subject stated that the instrument he/she uses the most is the written exam, while the instrument he/she uses the least is the composition.

In response to the ninth question, as to how whether or not there are many failures among the groups that the subject instructs; the subject claims that there are very few failures.

In response to the tenth question, as to how the subjects' students perceive the English course in terms of difficulty; the subject claims that the students find the course more or less difficult, because sometimes they lack interest in studying.

In response to the eleventh question, as to what professional preparation (degrees) the subject has; the subject stated that he/she has a Licenciatura in English (BA), and certificates from additional courses.

In response to the twelfth question, as to whether the subject practices the English language or not; the subject stated that he/she practices English with his/her students, by means of audio/visual activities, and with his/her colleagues.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to whether the subject considers that his/her students can communicate in the English language; the subject claims his/her students can communicate in a more or less or regular manner.

In response to the fourteenth question, as to why there are so many failures in the English language, according to the subject's opinion; the subject stated that he/she has always considered that sometimes the teachers do not employ the best methodology of instruction in their classrooms; and also that the students lack interest in the course.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what the subject suggests can be done to help avoid failures in the English course; the subject suggests that there should be more communication among students and teachers; the students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate that they are capable of doing well in this course; and the students should not be repressed.

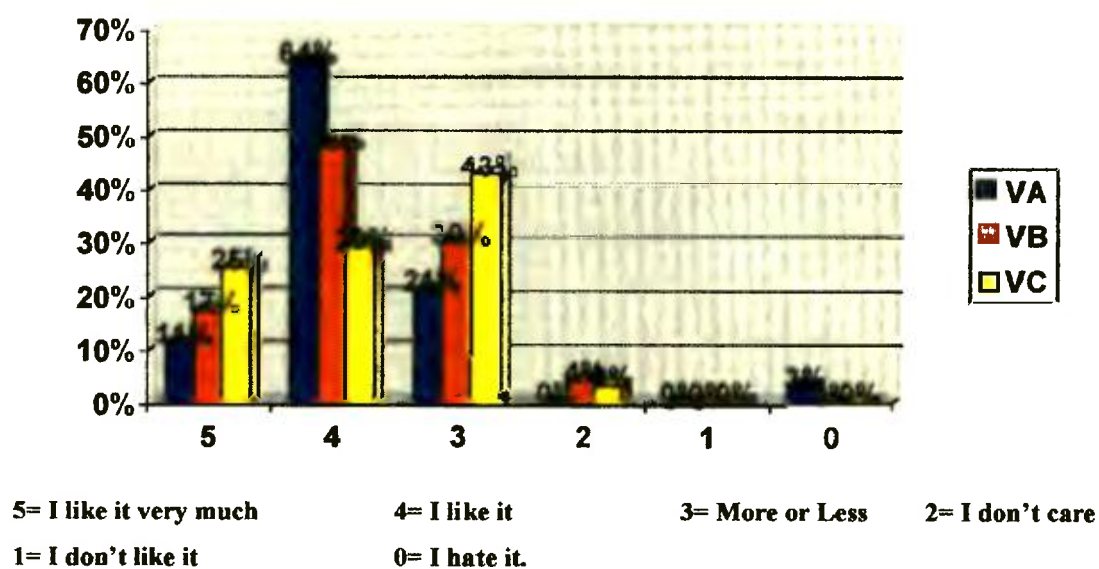
Letters tract on the morning schedule. In response to the first question, there are seventy-nine (79) students in the Letters tract

In response to the second question, as to whether or not the subjects like the English subject, the following information has emerged.

TABLE 1

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	28	3	11%	18	64%	6	21%	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
VB	23	4	17%	11	48%	7	30%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
VC	28	7	25%	8	29%	12	43%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	79	14	18%	37	47%	25	31%	2	2%	0	0%	1	1%

GRAPH 1



The average number of points (average attitude towards the English subject) is 3.98 which is a positive attitude, which means that the subjects like the English subject.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: one subject stated that the English language is important, and it enables them to communicate with people of English speaking countries. Another stated that it is an important and prestigious quality to be able to communicate in more than one language. One subject

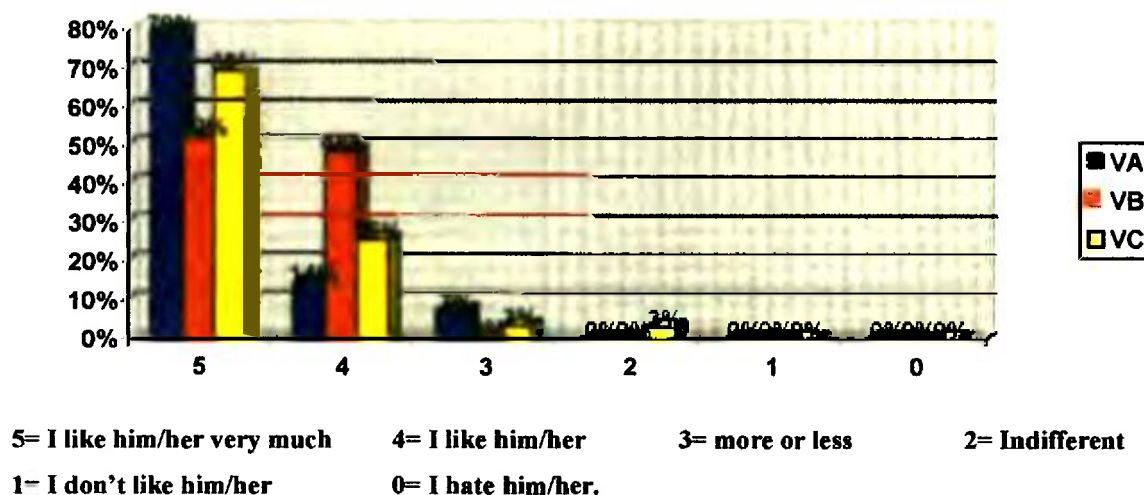
stated that he/she likes English because there are many aspects of the language that he/she understands, however, there are some he/she does not. Another subject stated that he/she likes English very much because it is a language that is seldom used in Panama, and he/she feels important when he/she speaks in this language. Another stated that it is necessary to learn English to obtain a decent job. Another added that, by learning English, a lot more knowledge and understanding is achieved, for most of what constitutes contemporary technology is designed in the English language. One subject stated that in this century in which we live, to be able to obtain a job in any or most enterprises, English is a requirement. However, there were also statements from subjects who claim that they consider English as a complicated language, some claim that they understand some features, yet have problems to read and write in the language; while others have problems understanding when listening, and expressing their thoughts by means of speech.

In response to the third question, as to whether or not the subjects like the English teacher, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 2

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	28	22	79%	4	14%	2	7%	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
VB	23	12	52%	11	48%	0	0%	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
VC	28	19	69%	7	25%	1	3%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	79	53	67%	22	29%	3	3%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 2



The average number of points (average attitude toward the teacher) is of 4.60, which implies that the subjects like their teacher very much.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: some subjects stated that the teacher is nice, explains well, and performs competently. Others stated that the teacher is very patient with the students, explains well, and gets along well with everyone. One subject stated that the teacher is very dedicated, and places all his/her hopes on the students's being able to learn his/her course. Another subject stated that he/she likes the teacher because he/she explains his/her class in an understandable manner, and when the students have doubts, he/she clears them up. Another subject stated that he/she likes the teacher because he/she tries to help them, unlike other professors who go on with their classes without even considering whether the students understands or not. On the other hand, one subject stated that the teacher does explain well, even though he/she finds the course boring, and even more boring to sit around listening to the class. Other subjects commented that the teacher speaks and pronounces English perfectly; some see him/her as a great friend. One subject stated that the teacher teaches them new things, and evaluates them well. Another stated that the teacher is very agreeable and attentive with all of the students.

Six subjects prefer compositions. One subject stated that depending on the evaluation scale the teacher uses, students usually do better on this type of activity. Another stated that compositions are good for developing writing skills. One other subject stated that he/she likes to use his/her brain. Others stated that compositions allow them to express their ideas creatively, and competently.

Ten subjects prefer oral exams. One subject stated that by this means, he/she develops his/her speaking skills. Another subject stated that he/she likes oral exams because students “have” to study for them, and because they learn pronunciation and vocabulary. One subject stated that by this means, students are able to practice correct accent and unification of words. Nevertheless, some subjects stated that oral exams are easier because they are given more time to prepare.

Twenty-four subjects prefer written exams. Some of the justifications offered were as follow: One subject stated that all he/she has to do to prepare is practice a lot. Another stated that he/she learns to work with verbs, auxiliaries, and so forth; by means of this type of evaluation. Other subjects stated that they are given more time to think and analyze the questions. Others state that they are able to concentrate better. One subject stated that by this means, students are able to “share” ideas. One other subject stated that he/she is able to prepare at home, and when he/she comes to school he/she knows exactly what to answer on the exam. One subject stated that he/she prefers written exams because he/she can cheat more easily.

Five subjects prefer role-plays. One subject stated that he/she prefers role-plays because everyone can share opinions, and it is an easy way to learn English. Another stated that role-plays are very funny and relaxing. One also stated that it is a fun and different way to participate and work in groups. Another stated that he/she loves to act and get involved with others.

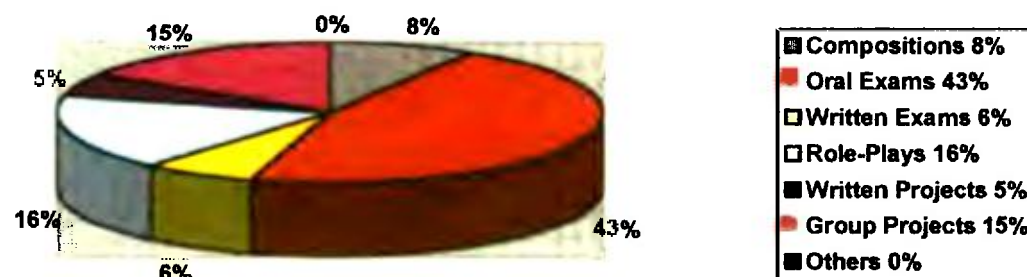
Eight subjects prefer written projects. One subject stated that by this means, he/she incorporates new words into his/her vocabulary. Another stated that he/she learns to use the grammatical structures of the language. Some subjects stated that they practice their writing skills, analyze and reason to develop their projects. Other subjects claim that written projects allow them to develop their research skills, and present more interesting information to the class.

Nineteen subjects prefer group projects. Most of the subjects agree that by this means, students are able to share ideas, help one another when some of them do not understand, and they claim it is a cooperative way of learning.

One subject prefers to work with audio tapes, “cassettes” (others), because they allow him/her to listen to the activities and develop the activities in the book, allowing him/her to develop listening comprehension skills.

In response to the sixth question, as to which is the form of evaluation the subjects like least, the following information emerged:

GRAPH 5



Six subjects stated that they do not like compositions because they have to think too much, put too many words together in a logical order; they claim that they are not imaginative or creative, and have a weak grammatical background.

Thirty-four subjects stated that they do not like oral exams because they become confused when they have to speak, and are ashamed to stand up in front of an audience. Some of them added that after their presentation, when the teacher asks them questions having to do with their topic, they do not have enough time to think about their answers. Others stated that they have to memorize too much material, and they learn nothing by doing this. Some complain that they have a very bad pronunciation, others that they forget words, and alter the whole order of their presentations.

Five subjects stated that they do not like written exams because sometimes they do not understand the instructions; too much memory is involved.

Thirteen subject stated that they do not like role-plays because they are ashamed of acting in front of their classmates. One subject stated that he/she finds role plays to be very little communicative, and most of the time his/her classmates do not understand the content and message of the activity. Another stated that too much has to be made up, and many students are not creative.

Four subjects stated that they do not like written projects because they have a limited vocabulary, it requires the use of too much grammatical background, and the syntax is very complicated.

Twelve subjects stated that they do not like group projects, and their main argument is that not all of the students work; and, while a few are doing most of the work, those who do nothing make the same grade as those who did.

Five subjects did not respond to the question.

In response to the seventh question, as to whether there are many failures in the subjects' class, most of the subjects stated that there are no bimestral failures in the English subject among their classmates; however, there are cases of students who fail

plenty on tests and other activities during the bimester, due, in the vast majority of the cases, to lack of concentration in class, lack of preparatuon for the tests, laziness, and even playing around and working on assignments for other subjects during the English course

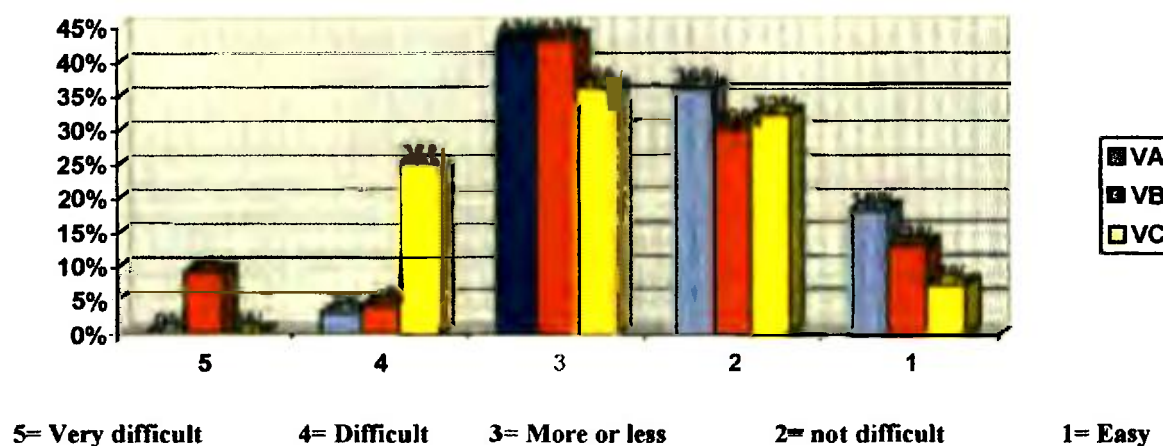
In response to the eighth question, as to what the subjects consider should be done so that students do not fail the English subject; some subjects stated that the teacher should attend more to the individual needs of the students. One subject stated that there should be more exams, projects, and homework assigned for evaluation. Many subjects stated that the students should concentrate more in class, and study more. Other subjects stated that students should have more interest in the subject, for it is very interesting to learn. Some subjects suggested that teachers should be a little less strict with students; while some subjects stated that teachers should be more strict. One subject stated that students should find more efficient strategies for learning.

In response to the ninth question, as to how subjects perceive the English course in terms of difficulty, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 3

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	28	0	0%	1	3%	12	43%	10	36%	5	18%
VB	23	2	9%	1	4%	10	43%	7	30%	3	13%
VC	28	0	0%	7	25%	10	36%	9	32%	2	7%
Total	79	2	3%	9	11%	32	41%	26	33%	10	9%

GRAPH 6



The average number of points (average degree of difficulty) is 2.58 points, which implies that the subjects perceive the English course as being a more or less difficult one.

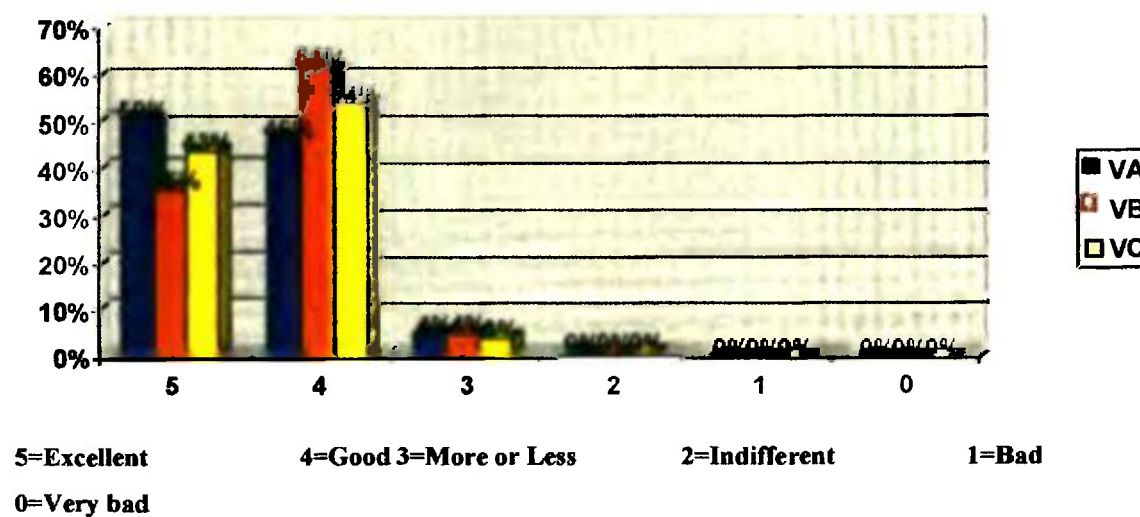
The justifications offered are as follows: some subjects stated that the course is of interest to them. Others stated that, if students dedicated enough time and effort, they would find the the course is not that difficult. One subject stated that this is a course that requires a lot of practice and reasoning on the part of the students to master the English language. Another subject stated that English is a subject in which the pronunciation and writing must be mastered; and, for this reason, he/she finds that it is a more or less difficult subject. Another added that it is grammar and pronunciation, which have to be mastered. Some subjects stated that they find English to be a difficult subject because English is not their language; and because the pronunciation of English words is difficult. One subject stated that some students may perceive English as being very little difficult; however, this does not mean that it is easy, for it is not that easy to master a language that is little spoken in Panama. Another subject stated that he/she does not like this subject very much because he/she has to translate a lot to be able to understand. Nevertheless, most of the subjects agreed that English is not a very difficult course. Only that like any other subject, it needs to be dedicated a certain amount of time and effort.

In response to the tenth question, as to how the subjects perceive the attitude of the teacher towards them, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 4

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	28	14	50%	13	46%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VB	23	8	35%	14	61%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VC	28	12	43%	15	54%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	79	34	43%	42	53%	3	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 7



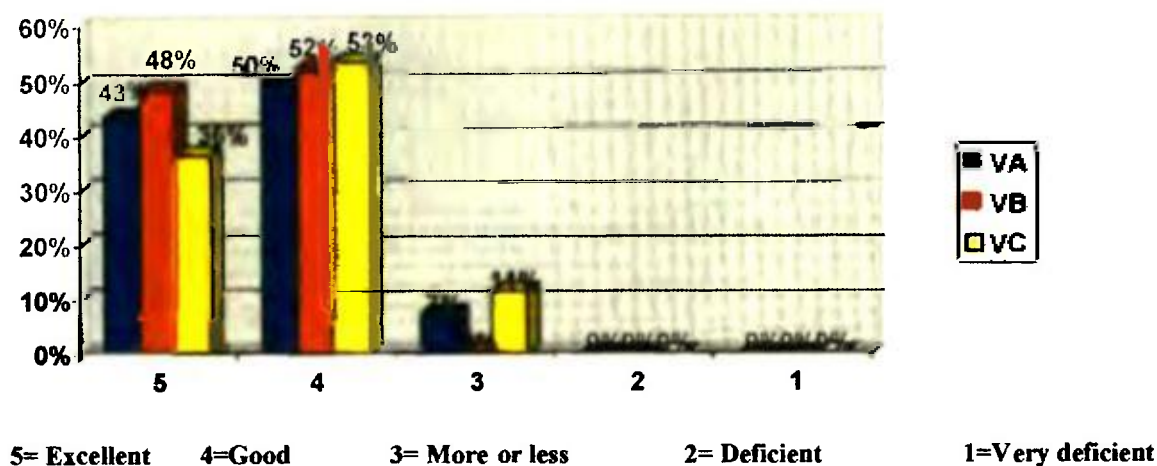
The average amount of points (average attitude of the teacher towards the students) is 4.39, which implies that the subjects perceive the teacher's attitude as being good.

Some of the explanations offered by the subjects are as follows: some subjects stated that the teacher interests him/herself in the students' learning. Some added that the teacher is a nice person, and tries to help them; he/she gives those students, who deserve it, the opportunities they need to pass. One subject stated that the teacher instructs them with patience and care. Another stated that the teacher is sometimes in a good mood, and sometimes he/she is in a bad mood. Another subject stated that the teacher explains in an excellent manner, he/she is friendly, strict in his/her evaluations; the teacher loves his/her profession, which makes him/her very good at what he/she does. Another stated that the teacher is good because he/she can understand him/her.

In response to the eleventh question, as to how the subjects perceive the teacher's preparation in the methodology of instruction of the English language, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 5

Group	Nº	5		4		3		2		1	
		Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
VA	28	12	43%	14	50%	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%
VB	23	11	48%	12	52%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VC	28	10	36%	15	53%	3	11%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	79	33	42%	41	52%	5	6%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 8

The average number of points (average preparation in methodology of instruction of the English language of the teacher) is of 4.35, which implies that the subjects perceive the teacher's methodology of instruction as good.

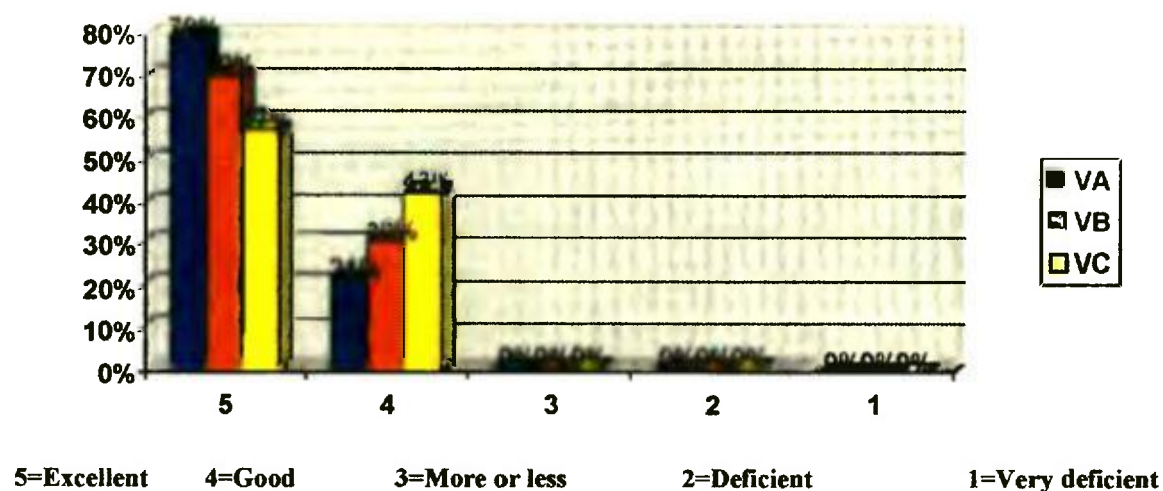
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects are as follows: One subject stated that the methodological preparation of the teacher is very good, for he/she has complete control over the course and the students. Some subjects stated that the teacher gives them a lot of work, he/she explains everything, and if they do not understand he/she translates for them. Others stated that the teacher knows how to explain. However, one subject stated that the teacher is moving too fast, without taking into account previous knowledge. One subject stated that there is no motivation in the class; he/she considers that the teacher should do something to get the students' attention.

In response to the twelfth question, as to whether the subjects think that the teacher masters the English language or not; the following information has emerged:

TABLE 6

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	28	22	79%	6	21%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VB	23	16	70%	7	30%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VC	28	16	57%	12	43%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	79	54	68%	25	32%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 9



The average number of points (average opinion of the mastery of the English language by the teacher) is of 4.68, which implies that the subjects perceive the teacher's mastery of the English language as excellent.

Some of the explanations offered by the subjects are as follows: the teacher makes few mistakes, and he/she is very simple and concise when he/she has to explain. Others stated that the teacher has good pronunciation, and he/she masters the grammar. Others state that if the teacher had not mastered the language, he/she would not be

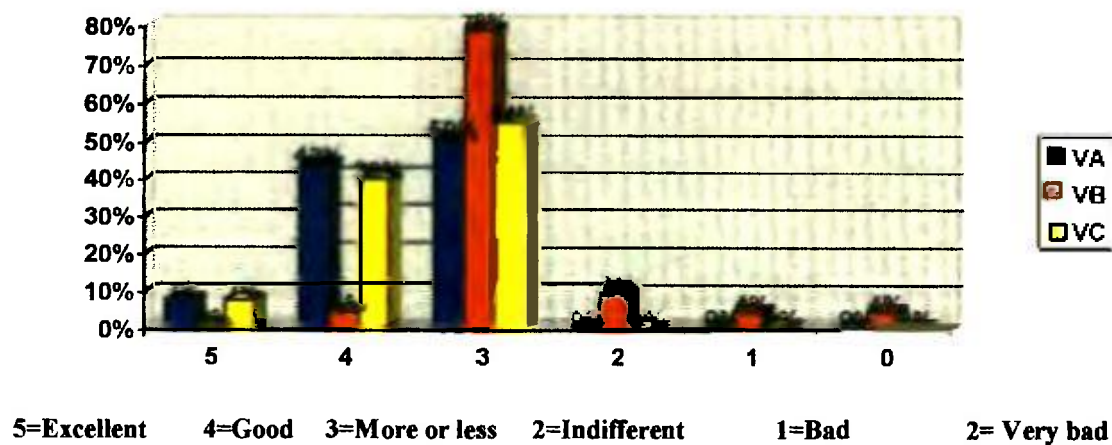
teaching. However, most of the subjects agreed that the teacher speaks, performs, and interprets the English language correctly.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to how the subject's perceive their classmates' attitude towards the teacher; the following information has emerged:

TABLE 7

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	28	2	7%	12	43%	14	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VB	23	0	0%	1	4%	18	78%	2	9%	1	4%	1	4%
VC	28	2	7%	11	39%	15	54%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	79	4	5%	24	29%	47	61%	0	3%	1	1%	1	1%

GRAPH 10



The average number of points (average attitude of the students towards the teacher) is of 3.27, which implies that the subjects perceive their classmates' attitudes towards the teacher as being somewhat positive.

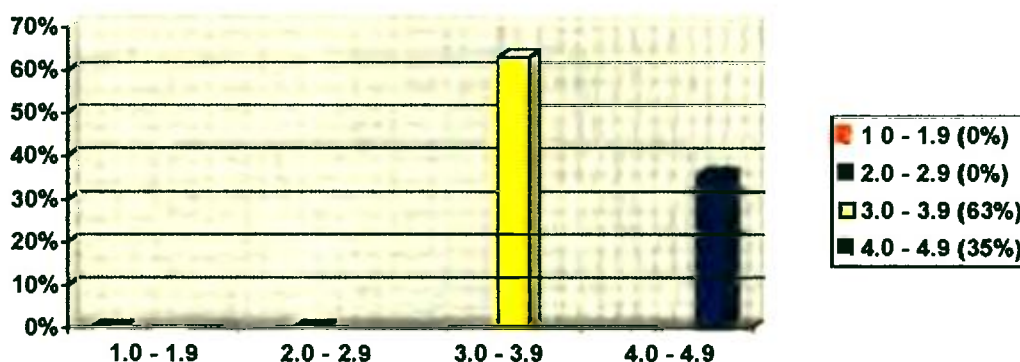
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects are as follow: one subject stated that since the teacher is so nice to them, his/her classmates become exalted, and think they can do whatever they want in class. Some subjects stated that sometimes the students are funny, make jokes and play around, and the teacher becomes aggravated. Others stated that they do not pay attention in class, or that they do not act disrespectfully towards the teacher, however, they do misbehave. On the other hand, some subjects claimed that there are students who do not respect the teacher. Others stated that the students talk too much during class and do not allow the teacher to explain. Some students claimed that the misconduct of some of the students is due to the lack of interest towards the course. However, many subjects stated that most of their classmates admire the teacher because of his/her personality. One stated that there are times when the students do not help the teacher control discipline, however, there are times when the teacher “deserves it”. Others stated that sometimes they can be very restless, and they make the class a little difficult. One subject stated that since many of the students are not doing well in the course, they decide to misbehave on purpose.

In response to the fourteenth question, as to what the subjects think the teacher should do so that students do not fail in the English subject; the following information has emerged: Some subjects stated that it is very difficult because you can not make anyone do what they do not want to do; however, new methods (more fun) should be found to make the subject more interesting. Others suggested that the students should pay more attention, have more work assigned to them so that they have every opportunity to do better; they should look for more strategies to study, and participate in the classes; the teacher should change his/her mechanisms a bit to motivate students; the teacher should also change her methodology of instruction; he/she should emphasize more on explaining not only grammar, but composition and reading as well. Some subjects stated that the teacher should talk more to the students about the importance of learning English for the future, and explain the background of this language in our country. One subject stated that sometimes the teacher should “just let the students do

whatever they want". However, most of the subjects suggested that the teacher should be more stricter, give them more work, and put them to do it.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what were the subjects final grades in the previous bimester, the following information has emerged:

GRAPH 11



According to the data, 0% of the subjects of the letters tract have failing grades; however, 63% of the subjects have borderline passing grades (3.0 – 3.9), while 35% of the subjects have relatively high grades (4.0 – 4.9). Two subjects did not respond to the question.

The eighth set of data analyzed was provided by the questionnaire administered to the teacher who instructs the students in the Science tract on the morning schedule. In response to the first question, as to what tract the subject instructs; the subject instructs the students of the Science tract on the morning schedule, and some IV year groups of the Commerce tract.

In response to the second question, as to how many years the subject has been teaching English in the Instituto Urracá to this tract; the subject stated that he/she has been working with this tract for five (5) years.

In response to the third question as to whether the subject has taught English to any other tract; the subject stated that he/she has worked with the Commerce tract.

In response to the fourth question, as to with which tract the subject prefers to work, the subject claims to prefer to work with the Science tract, because the students of this tract participate more

In response to the fifth question, as to what type of topics the subject usually uses to teach his/her classes; the subject stated that he/she uses scientific and humanistic topics, because this is what the students need to learn.

In response to the sixth question, as to how the subject perceives his/her students' attitudes towards the English course; the subject stated that the students like the subject more or less, because some of them have not given the subject the importance that it deserves

In response to the seventh question, as to how the subject perceives the attitudes of the students towards him/her, the subject claims that the students have an indifferent attitude towards him/her, because he/she is just another teacher

In response to the eighth question, as to what type of instrument the subject uses most often to evaluate the students; the subject stated that the instrument he/she uses the most is the written exam, and the instruments he/she uses least is the written project.

In response to the ninth question, as whether there are many failures among the groups he/she teaches, the subject claims that there are few failures among his/her students

In response to the tenth question, as to how the subject's students perceive the English course in terms of difficulty, in his/her opinion; the subject claims that the

students consider the course not difficult, however, they are not accustomed to receive the whole class in the English language

In response to the eleventh question, as to what professional preparation (degrees) the subject has, the subject stated that he/she has a Licenciatura in English (BA) from the Universidad, and a Masters of Arts in ELT from the University of Nebraska.

In response to the twelfth question, as to whether or not the subject practices the English language; the subject stated that he/she practices the English language at home, with his/her students, by means of reading, by means of audio/visual activities, and with colleagues.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to whether the subject thinks that his/her students can communicate in the English language; the subject claims that his/her subjects can communicate more or less or in a regular manner in the English language

In response to the fourteenth question, as to why there are so many failures in the English course, according to the subject's opinion; the subject claims that it is because of the limited interest that students have in the course. The subject also stated that the students are more interested in courses such as chemistry, physics, and mathematics.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what the subject suggests can be done to help avoid failures in the English course; the subject suggests the promotion of the importance of the English language and its use in the students' future.

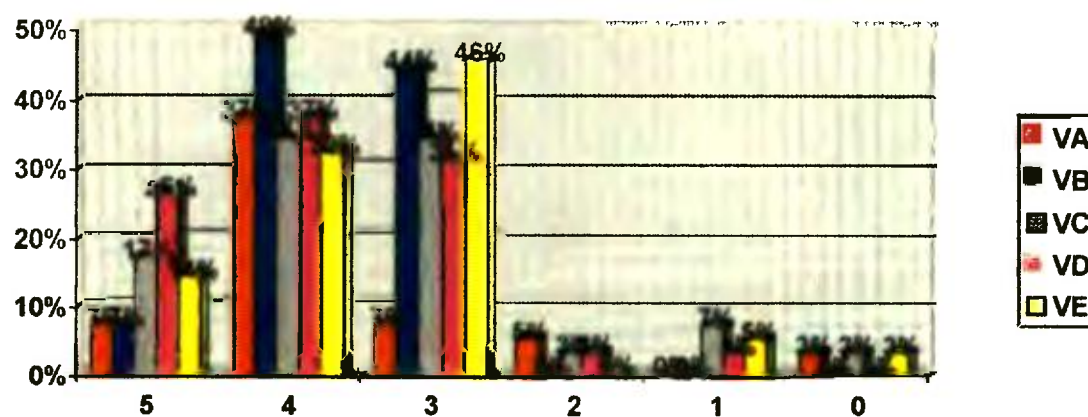
The ninth set of data analyzed, corresponded to that provided by the questionnaire provided to the students of the Science tract on the morning schedule. In response to the first question, there are one hundred and eighty-five (185) students in this tract.

In response to the second question, as to how the subjects perceive the English subject, in terms of their attitude towards the subject; the following information has emerged:

TABLE 1

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	40	3	7%	15	37%	16	7%	2	5%	3	7%	1	3%
VB	41	3	7%	20	49%	18	44%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VC	29	5	17%	10	34%	10	34%	1	3%	2	5%	1	3%
VD	38	10	26%	14	37%	12	31%	1	3%	1	3%	0	0%
VE	37	5	14%	12	32%	17	46%	0	0%	2	5%	1	3%
Total	185	26	14%	71	38%	73	32%	4	2%	8	3%	3	2%

GRAPH 1



5= I like it very much 4=I like it 3= More or less 2= Indifferent 1= I don't like it
0= I hate it

The average number of points (average attitude of the subjects toward the English subject) is of 3.50, which implies that the subjects like the English subject more or less or have a somewhat positive attitude.

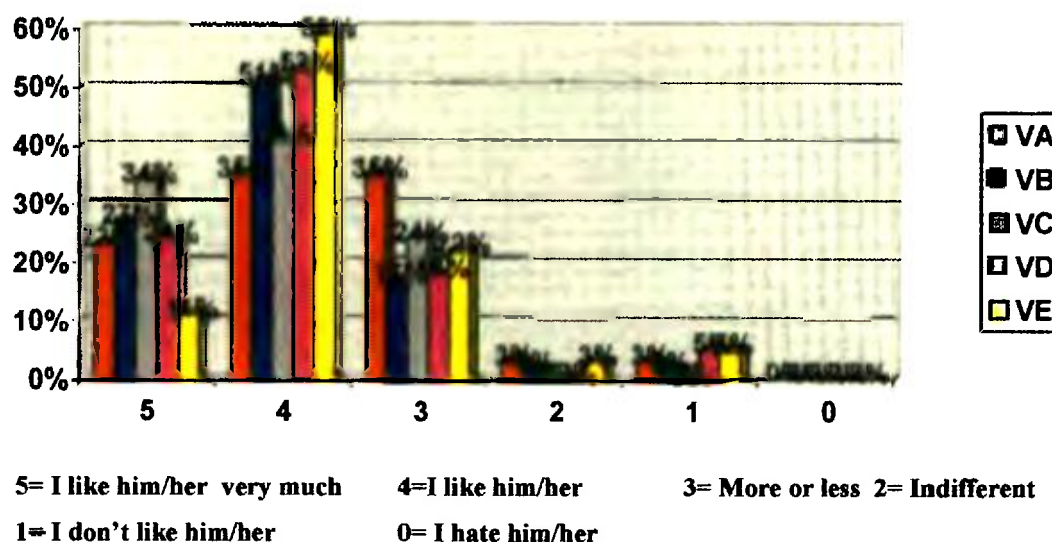
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follow: some subjects stated that they do not understand the English language, and for this reason, they do not care much for the course. Some added that English was not their tongue, and this is why they do not care for the subject. One subject stated that he/she does find English to be esential, however, he/she is not very interested in learning it for other than professional and/or educational reasons. Another subject stated that he/she does like the English subject, and considers it necessary to learn the language to obtain a job in the future, since he/she realices that it has already become a requirement. One subject stated that he/she finds English to be an interesting language and subject, however, at times it can be difficult which causes many students to lose interest in learning it. Another subject said: "English is esential for life", however, he/she does not understand it. Furthermore, most of the subjects seem to agree that English is crucial for professional development, and regardless of the fact that they do not like the language or the subject very much, they are aware that they need to learn it for future, professional reasons.

In response to the third question, as to whether the subjects like their English teacher or not, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 2

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	40	9	23%	14	35%	14	35%	1	3%	1	3%	0	0%
VB	41	11	27%	21	51%	7	17%	1	2%	1	2%	0	0%
VC	29	10	34%	12	41%	7	24%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VD	38	9	24%	20	53%	7	18%	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%
VE	37	4	11%	22	59%	8	22%	1	3%	2	5%	0	0%
Total	185	43	24%	89	48%	43	24%	3	2%	6	3%	0	0%

GRAPH 2

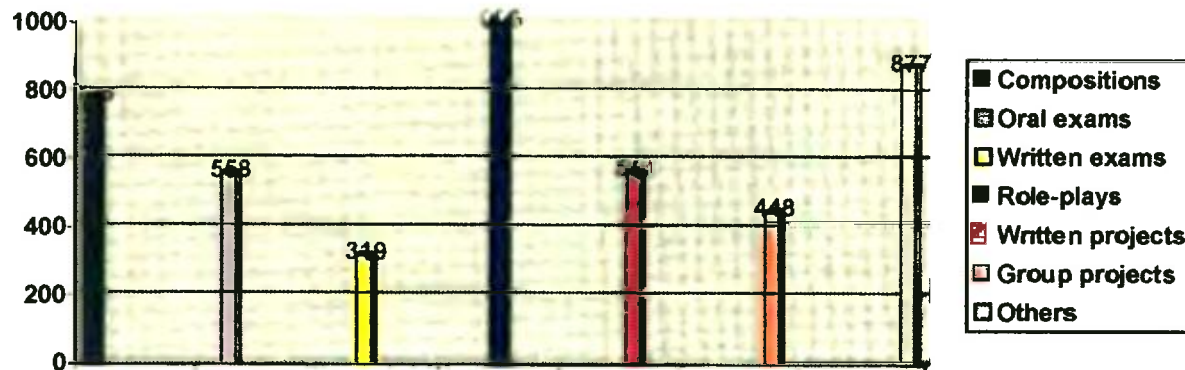


The average number of points (average attitude of the subjects towards the teacher) is 3.84, which implies that the subjects generally have a positive attitude toward their teacher.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: some subjects stated that they like the teacher because he/she is nice, however, they do not like him/her when he/she only speaks English. One subject stated that the teacher is interested in getting them to speak in English, and helping them to understand, for everything he/she says to them is in English. Another subject stated that he/she finds the teacher to be very nice, however, on some practices and exercises there are structures that he/she does not understand, and the teacher makes it only more complicated, because he/she speaks too fast. One subject finds the teacher to be an excellent instructor and person, even though, most of the time he/she does not understand what the teacher is saying, he/she is convinced that the teacher expresses him/herself well in the English language. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the subjects agree that the teacher is a nice person, however, they seldom understand what he/she says because he/she never uses Spanish in the classroom.

In response to the fourth question, as to which is the form of evaluation most used by the teacher to grade the students, the following information has emerged:

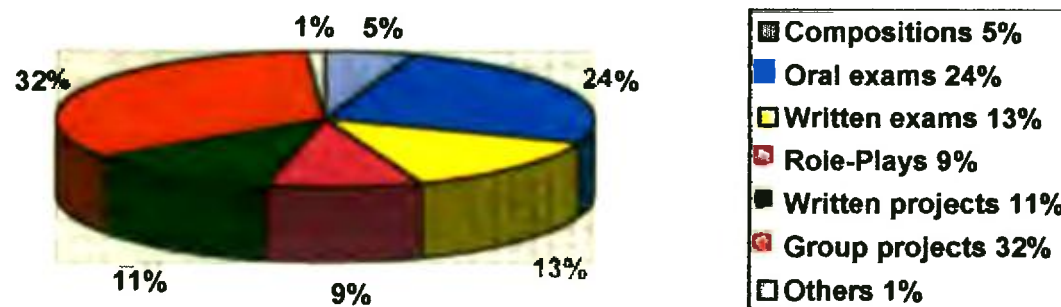
GRAPH 3



According to the subjects, the form of evaluation most used by the teacher to grade them is by means of written exams, with an average of 319 points; while the least used is that of role-plays, with an average of 996 points.

In response to the fifth question, as to which of these instruments of evaluation the subjects prefer, the following information has emerged:

GRAPH 4



Ten (10) subjects stated that they prefer compositions because they can express themselves, and details about their personalities and experiences that no one else knows; because they are able to practice the grammar of the language, and learn to interpret it; they also like them because they can write about any topic they like, and they can use a lot of description

Fourty-four (44) subjects prefer oral exams because they are able to practice pronunciation, and communication skills; they put into the grammatical structures that they learn in class in daily speech, they also learn some semantic structures of the language

Twenty-four (24) subjects prefer written exams because they have time to think about what they are going to answer; they have the opportunity to memorize the materla which makes it easier for them to answer the items correctly on the tests; some of them also like written exams because it is easier for them to cheat and make good grades.

Seventeen (17) subjects prefer role-plays because they find them fun, and they can express themselves better, they are able to share experiences among themselves; they can bring a lot of real life situations into the class to share with the rest of their classmates; and because they have the opportunity to find out who has special talents and skills.

Twenty-one (21) subjects prefer written projects because they have a better chance of making good grades; they have time to work at home and investigate what they need to know to complete their projects, and they have the chance to analyze and consult with books, and explore the Internet.

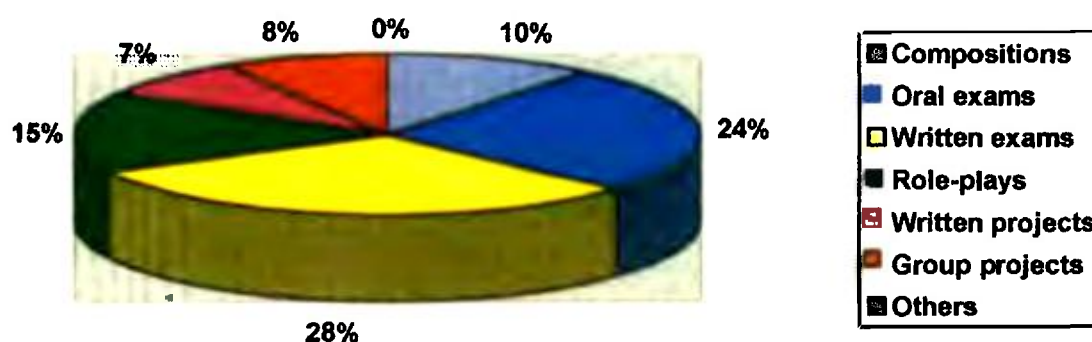
Fifty-nine (59) subjects prefer group projects because they have the opportunity to work together, and share ideas; when some students do not understand, those who do can help them out; they can cooperate with one another, share information, and exploit their creativity and imagination

Three (3) subjects prefer to work in the language laboratory (others), because it is easier for them to learn; they are more comfortable working in air-conditioned places; and also because the lab assistance speak to them in Spanish.

Seven (7) subjects did not respond to this question.

In response to the sixth question, as to which form of evaluation the subjects dislike the most, the following information has emerged:

GRAPH 5



Nineteen (19) subjects dislike compositions because they do not know many terms in English; because they do not have enough background or previous knowledge in the English language to write a composition; too much reading has to be done to obtain enough information to write; because they have a shortage of vocabulary; and due to a lack of knowledge of grammatical structures.

Forty-five (45) subjects dislike oral exams because they are ashamed to stand up in front of an audience, and speak in another language that is not their own; evaluation is stricter; their pronunciation is weak; their vocabulary and grammar is limited; and their memory fails, and they do not have time to think.

Fifty-two (52) subjects dislike written exams because they require too much memorization

Twenty-eight (28) subjects dislike role-plays, because they are ashamed to act in front of their classmates; they forget their lines, they have bad pronunciation; they have a shortage of vocabulary; not everyone works the same amount; they can not act; they find them boring.

Thirteen (13) subjects dislike written projects because their syntax is weak; orthography is a problem; the subjects are too lazy to investigate; and they find them boring

Fourteen (14) subjects dislike group projects because not everyone works equally, and it is not fair for some students to pass on the backs of others.

Fourteen (14) subjects did not respond to this question

In response to the seventh question, as to whether there are many failures among the subjects' classmates in the English course, the following information has emerged: most of the subjects agree that there are not many failures among their group, however, those students, who do fail, do so due to lack of interest, time, and effort in the course; they do not want to study, and for this reason they do badly

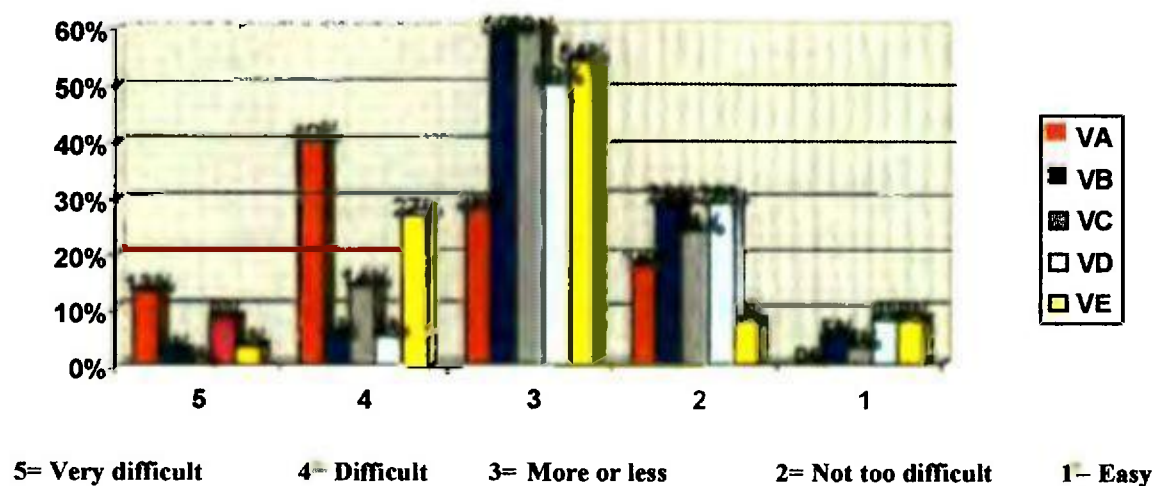
In response to the eighth question, as to what the subjects feel can be done so that the students will not fail so much in the English subject: one subject considers that students with problems in English should take after-class courses to improve. Another considers that the teacher should present new alternatives and methods to make the class easier and more fun. Some think that students should pay more attention to the class instead of showing so little interest. Most subjects, however, consider that their classmates should dedicate more effort and time to studying and preparing for class.

In response to the ninth question, as to how the subjects perceive the English subject in terms of difficulty, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 3

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	40	5	13%	16	40%	11	28%	7	18%	0	0%
VB	41	1	2%	2	5%	24	59%	12	29%	2	5%
VC	29	0	0%	4	14%	17	59%	7	24%	1	3%
VD	38	3	8%	2	5%	19	50%	11	29%	3	8%
VE	37	1	3%	10	27%	20	54%	3	8%	3	8%
Total	185	10	5%	34	18%	91	50%	40	22%	9	5%

GRAPH 6



The average number of points (average grade of difficulty of the English subject) is 2.96 (3.00), which implies that the subjects perceive the English subject as being more or less difficult.

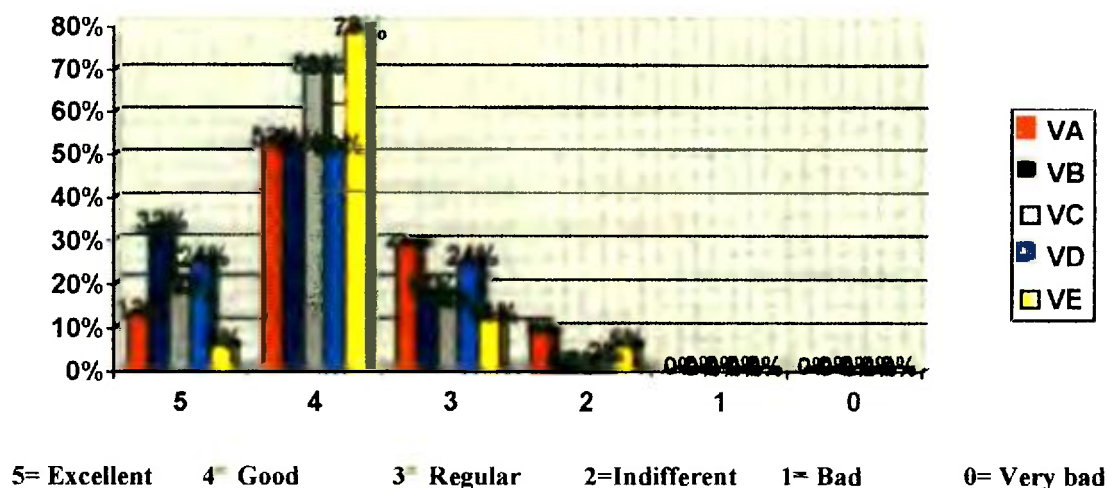
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: one subject stated that this is the subject in which he/she has obtained the lowest grade average, and it is a subject that requires a lot of time and practice. Some subjects stated that it is a subject little understood by the students. One subject stated that he/she finds the rules of the language (linguistics) to be difficult. Other subjects stated that they find the pronunciation and writing very difficult.

In response to the tenth question, as to how the subject perceives the attitude of the teacher towards them, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 4

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	40	5	12	21	52%	11	28%	3	8%	0	0%	0	0%
VB	41	13	32	21	51%	7	17%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VC	29	5	17	20	69%	4	14%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VD	38	9	24	19	50%	9	24%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
VE	37	2	5	29	78%	4	11%	2	5%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	185	34	18%	110	60%	35	19%	6	3%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 7



The average number of points (average perception of the attitude of the teacher towards the students) is 3.92, which implies that the subjects perceive the teacher's attitude as good

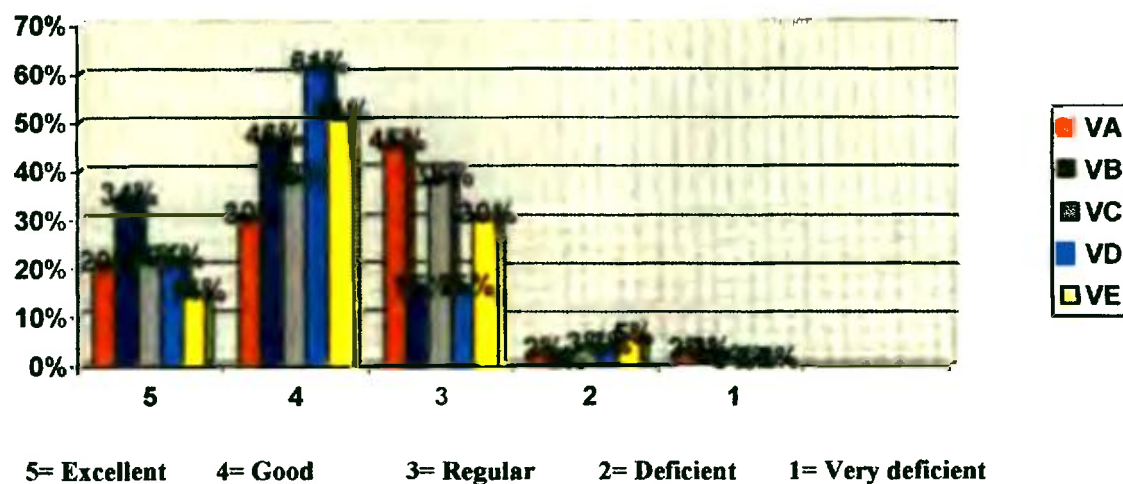
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follow: some subjects stated that the teacher is understanding. Others stated that they have to admit that the teacher helps them a lot. One subject suggested that the teacher should be stricter with the students who misbehave. Some subjects stated that the teacher is very easygoing, and understanding. Others stated that what is most important is that the teacher is never angry, that is what allows students to appreciate him/her more, and makes the class more pleasant. However, one subject referred to the teacher's attitude as "tolerable, but non-understandable" Some subjects stated that the teacher is nicer to the more studious than to those not as studious.

In response to the eleventh question, as to whether the subject perceive their teacher as being well prepared methodologically for the instruction of the English language, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 5

Group	Nº	5		4		3		2		1	
		Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
VA	40	8	12%	12	30%	18	45%	1	2%	1	2%
VB	41	14	32%	19	46%	6	15%	0	0%	1	2%
VC	29	6	17%	11	38%	11	38%	1	3%	0	0%
VD	38	9	24%	23	61%	6	15%	1	3%	0	0%
VE	37	5	5%	19	51%	11	30%	2	5%	0	0%
Total	185	41	18%	84	45%	52	29%	5	3%	2	0%

GRAPH 8



The average number of points (average perception of the teacher's preparation in instructional methodology of the English) is 3.83, which implies that the subjects perceive the teacher's methodological preparation as good.

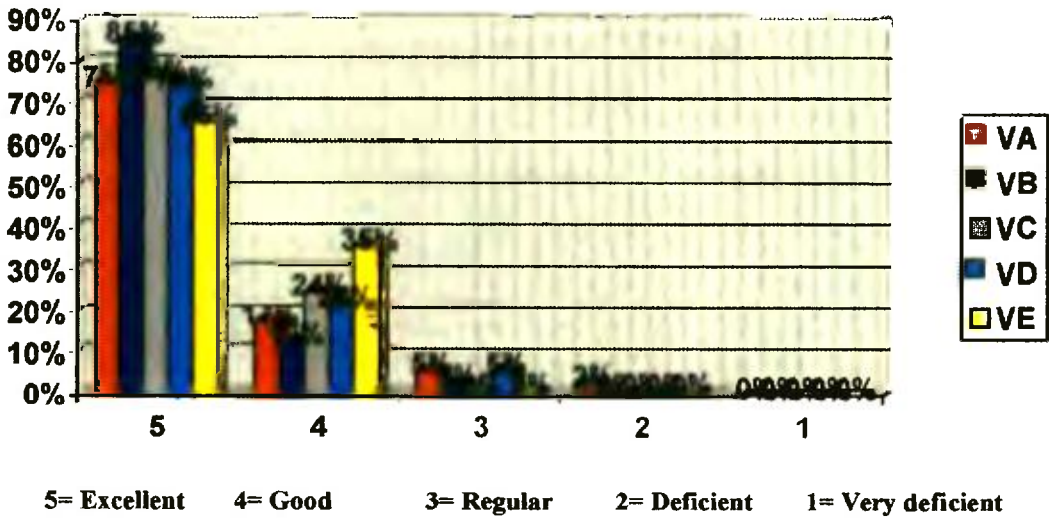
Some of the justification offered by the subjects were as follows: one subject stated that the teacher's methodology is good because he/she uses activities to allow students to develop communication skills in the English language. Another subject stated that even though the teacher has a good methodology, he/she believes that in a course like the one they are taking in school, students do not learn very much. Another subject stated that the teacher makes the class fun, and all doubts are usually cleared; some classified the methodology of the teacher as regular, for the class is low in motivation.

In response to the twelfth question, as to whether the subjects consider that the teacher masters the English language or not, the following information emerged:

TABLE 7

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	40	30	75%	7	17%	2	5%	1	2%	0	0%
VB	41	35	85%	5	12%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
VC	29	22	76%	7	24%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VD	38	28	74%	8	21%	2	5%	0	0%	0	0%
VE	37	24	65%	13	35%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	185	139	75%	40	22%	5	2%	1	1%	0	0%

GRAPH 9



The average number of points (average perception of the teacher’s mastery of the English language) is 4.71, which implies that the students perceive the teacher has having an excellent mastery of the English language.

Most of the subjects agree that the teacher speaks English perfectly; and in class; he /she never speaks Spanish. Furthermore, some subjects added that they know the

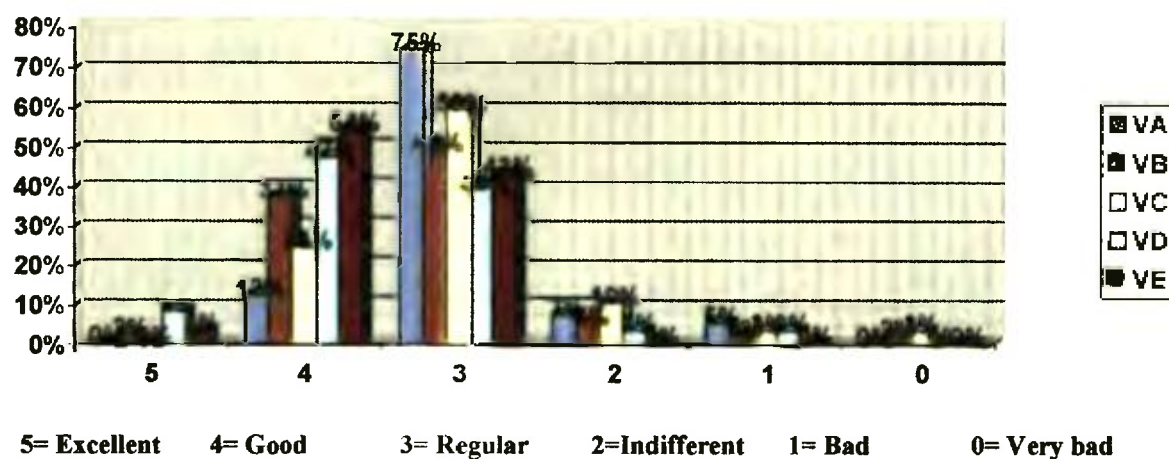
teacher studied in the United States, and claim that that is the reason he/she speaks so well.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to how the subjects perceive the attitudes of their classmates towards the teacher, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 8

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VA	40	0	0%	5	12%	30	79%	3	7%	2	5%	0	0%
VB	41	1	2%	15	37%	20	49%	2	5%	1	2%	1	2%
VC	29	0	0%	7	24%	17	59%	3	10%	1	3%	1	3%
VD	38	3	8%	18	47%	15	39%	1	3%	1	3%	0	0%
VE	37	1	3%	20	54%	16	43%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	185	5	3%	65	35%	98	53%	9	5%	5	3%	2	1%

GRAPH 10



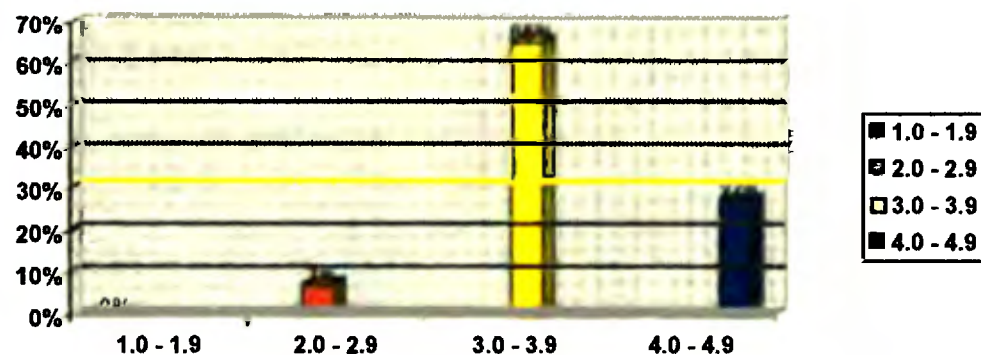
The average number of points (average attitude of the students towards the teacher) is 3.25, which implies that the subjects perceive the attitude of their classmates as “regular” but slightly positive.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follow: some of the subjects do not find the subject important, so they misbehave. Others claim their classmates are very disorganized and disorderly, and even though the teacher calls their attention, they do not care. Some subjects claim that their classmates only misbehave with the English teacher. Other subjects claim that their classmates misbehave because they think they are smarter than the teacher, but, in the end, they will all get their just deserts.

In response to the fourteenth question, as to what the subjects suggest the teacher should do to help avoid failures in his/her subject, the following information has emerged: one subject suggests that the teacher should help them, not by giving them with a high grade, but by helping them to make a greater effort in studying and practicing. Some subjects suggest that the teacher should give them more vocabulary, and combine English and Spanish. Others suggest that the teacher should change his/her method of instruction, make the class more fun and interesting. However, the vast majority of the subjects suggest that the teacher should make more use of Spanish and translation, so that they can understand better.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what were the subjects final grade in the previous bimester, the following information has emerged:

GRAPH 11



According to the data, 7% of the subjects of the letters tract have failing grades (2.0 – 2.9); 65% of the subjects have borderline passing grades (3.0 – 3.9), and 27% of the subjects have relatively high grades (4.0 – 4.9). One subject did not respond to the question.

The tenth set of data analyzed was that provided by the questionnaire administered to the teacher who instructs the students of the Science tract on the afternoon schedule. In response to the first question, as to what tract does the subject instruct; the subject instructs the students of the Science tract on the afternoon schedule.

In response to the second question, as to how many years the subject has been teaching English in the Instituto Urracá to this tract; the subject stated that she/he has been instructing this tract for nine (9) years.

In response to the third question, as to whether the subject has instructed any other tract; the subject stated that he/she has taught in the Commerce tract.

In response to the fourth question, as to which tract the subject prefers to work with, the subject prefers to work with the Science tract, because the students of this tract show more interest and enthusiasm in learning.

In response to the fifth question, as to what type of topics the subject usually uses to instruct in this tract; the subject stated that he/she uses various topics regarding the planet Earth, the ecosystem, medicine, history, geography, and so forth; because they are topics related to the other subjects the students are taking; and because the students like any topic that provides them with meaningful learning.

In response to the sixth question, as to how the subject perceives the attitude of the students towards the course, the subject perceives his/her students attitude towards the subject as more or less; the schedule is heavy and the heat in the afternoon is usually

unbearable; and the formal instruction that takes place in the classroom is boring to almost everyone.

In response to the seventh question, as to how the subject perceives the attitudes of the students towards him/her, the subject is not very sure whether the students like him/her or not, however, they have always shown him/her that they trust him/her, and they communicate a lot with him/her.

In response to the eighth question, as to what type or instrument the subject uses most to evaluate his/her students, the subject claims that the instrument he/she uses most is the role-play, and the instrument he/she uses the least is the written exam.

In response to the ninth question, as to whether there are many failures among the groups the subject instructs, the subject claims there are very few failures, because he/she considers that the students understand clearly when he/she explains, and they learn by working

In response to the tenth question, as to how the subject's students perceive the English course in terms of difficulty; the subject claims that the students perceive the course as not being difficult, because they use different techniques to learn, and they all have different learning strategies.

In response to the eleventh question, as to what professional preparation (degrees) the subject has, the subject stated that he/she has a Licenciatura in English (BA) from the Universidad de Panama and a Masters degree in English from the UNACHI (Universidad Autónoma de Chiriquí).

In response to the twelfth question, as to whether the subject practices the English language; the subject stated that he/she practices English with his/her students, by means of reading; and by means of audio/visual activities.

In response to the thirteenth question, as to whether the subject thinks that his/her students can communicate in the English language; the subject claims that his/her students can more or less communicate in the English language or in a "regular" manner.

In response to the fourteenth question, as to why the subject thinks there are so many failures in the English course, the subject stated that this is not the case of his/her students, however, there are failures in other groups that are due to the fact that learning a foreign language is not an easy task.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what the subject suggests can be done to help avoid failures in the English course, the subject suggests that each teacher should have a classroom in which to instruct his/her course, and the students should move to that classroom. The subject also suggests that more money should be invested in the purchase of tape recorders, CD programs, posters, and other audio-visual aids.

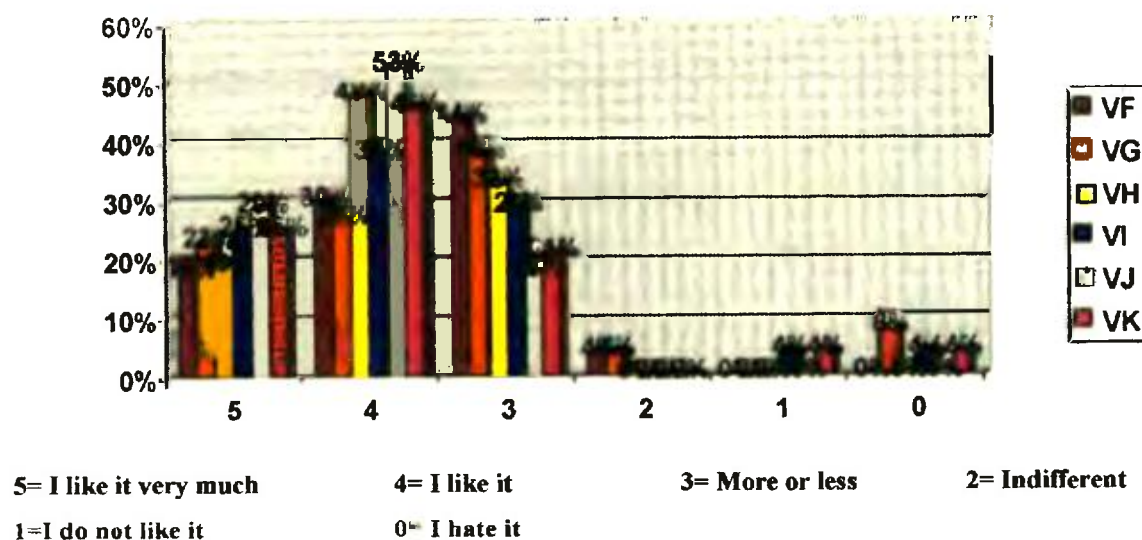
The last set of data analyzed was that provided by the questionnaires administered to the students of the Science tract on the afternoon schedule. In response to the first question, there are one hundred and thirty-nine (139) students in the Science tract on the afternoon schedule.

In response to the second question, as to whether the subjects like the English course or not, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 1

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VF	27	5	18%	8	30%	12	44%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
VG	26	6	23%	7	27%	10	38%	1	4%	0	0%	2	8%
VH	21	4	19%	10	48%	7	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

VI	24	6	25%	9	38%	7	29%	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%
VJ	17	5	29%	9	53%	3	18%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VK	24	6	25%	11	46%	5	21%	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%
Total	163	32	23%	54	40%	44	31%	2	1%	2	1%	4	3%

GRAPH 1

The average number of points (average attitude of the subject towards the English course) is 3.69, which implies that the subjects like the course more or less or are slightly positive in their attitudes towards this subject.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: most of the subjects stated that they found English to be a complicated language that they do not understand and, for this reason, they do not like the subject. Others stated that they found themselves having to spend too much time studying for this course, and this bothers

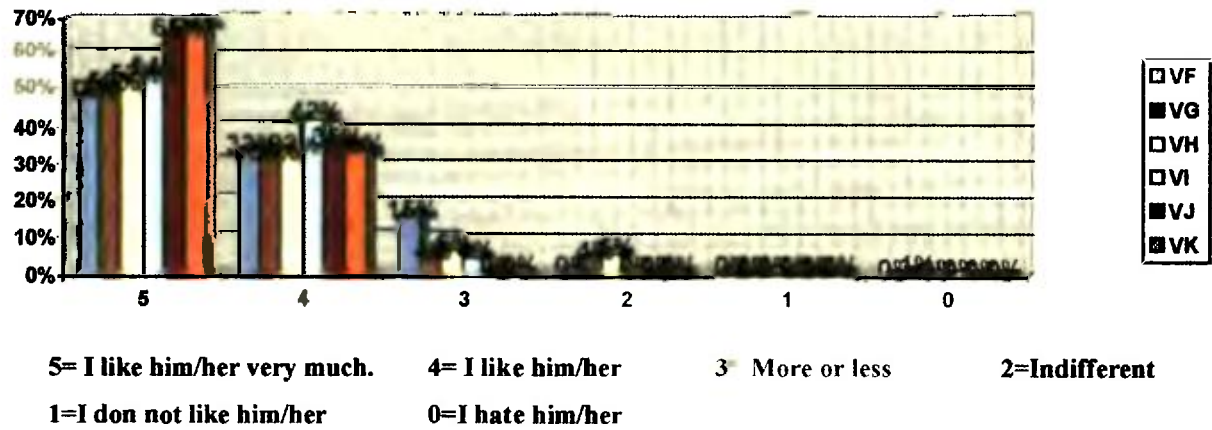
them. However, there are those who find that the subject is interesting, and claim that they know that it is crucial for their future that they learn the basics.

In response to the third question, as to whether the subjects like their teacher or not, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 2

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VF	27	13	48%	9	33%	4	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VG	26	13	50%	8	31%	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%	3	1%
VH	21	11	52%	7	33%	2	6%	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%
VI	24	13	54%	10	42%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VJ	17	11	65%	6	35%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VK	24	16	67%	8	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	163	77	56%	48	35%	8	5%	2	1%	0	0%	3	2%

GRAPH 2

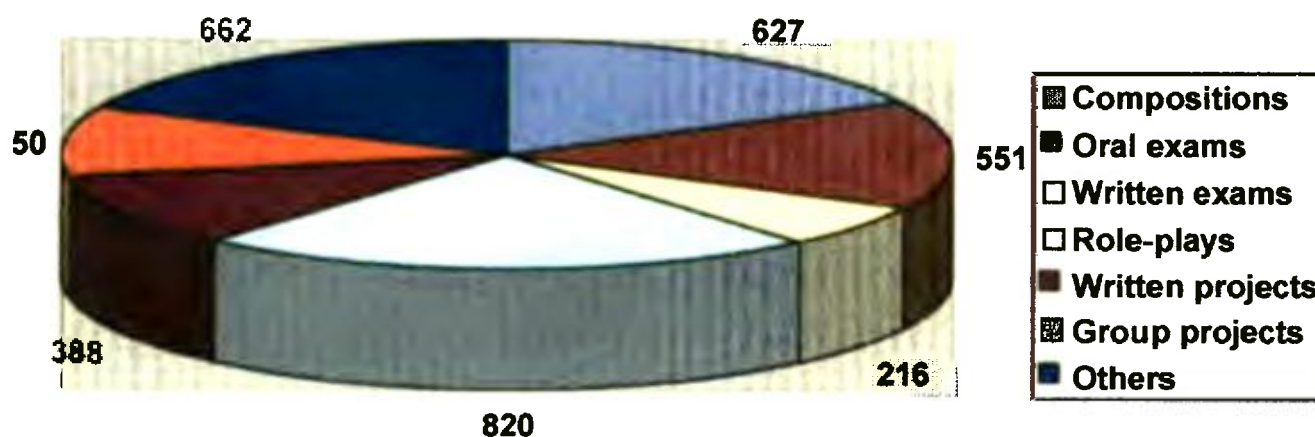


The average number of points (average attitude of the subjects towards the teacher) is 4.35, which implies that the subject like their English teacher.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: most of the subjects like their teacher because of his/her personality, and claim that he/she is understanding, trustworthy, and helps them whenever they need help. The subjects also stated that they have found a friend in the teacher, and as a teacher he/she has done a good job so far.

In response to the fourth question, as to what type of instrument the teacher uses most often for evaluation, and which he/she uses least, the following information has emerged:

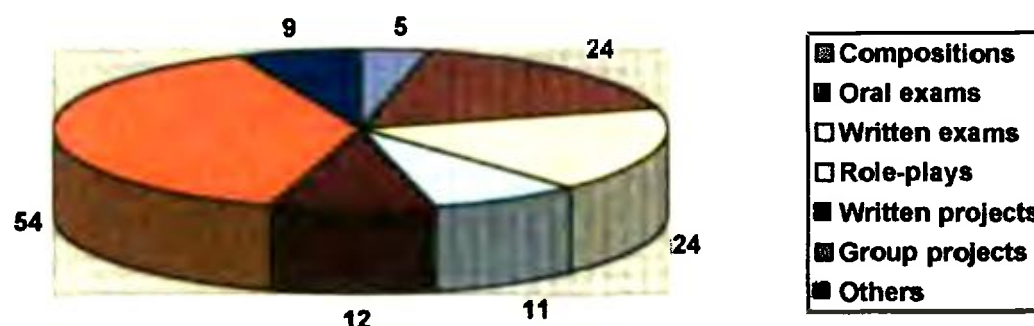
GRAPH 3



According to the data, the instrument most used by the teacher for evaluation is the written exam, with an average of 216 points; while the instrument least used by the teacher for evaluation is the role-play.

In response to the sixth question, as to which of these instruments the subject prefer, the following information has emerged:

GRAPH 4



Five (5) subjects prefer compositions because they can use their own experiences as topics; this activity gives them the opportunity to measure their own knowledge; they are obligated to do more thinking; a lot of comprehension and understanding are involved; and because they are more interesting.

Twenty-four (24) subjects prefer oral exams because they allow the students' knowledge about the English language to grow. One subject pointed out " what is the point of learning English if you aren't going to speak it?", so the point for him/her is that this activity gives the students the opportunity to be in contact with, and use the language. Another subject pointed out that oral exams give them the opportunity to put into practice all of the vocabulary and grammar they learn in class, for communication. However, most of the subjects agree that the only way to learn a language is by using it.

Twenty-four (24) subjects prefer written exams because they learn to read and write in English; they are able to measure their own knowledge; they are given a better opportunity to think and turn in their test sheets when they are ready; they are able to make use of memorization when they study; and, most of all, because they can cheat.

Eleven (11) subjects prefer role-plays because they are a fun way to learn the English language, bringing into the class real-world situations; role-plays allow them to communicate with their classmates, they are able to express their feelings and thoughts; and share with the rest of the group; and they can work on pronunciation and vocabulary.

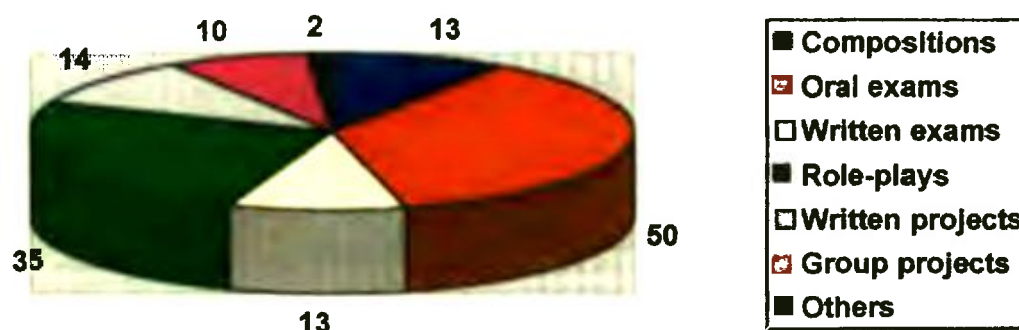
Twelve (12) subjects prefer written projects because they have more time to think, consult with others, verify if their information is correct; they do not have to worry about their pronunciation being wrong; they prefer to write in English rather than speak; and some like to investigate

Fifty-four (54) subjects prefer group projects because they are able to help one another when they do not understand; they can share ideas; and, most of all, because they can speak to one another in Spanish.

Three (3) subjects prefer to work with songs because songs are easier.

Six (6) subjects prefer to work in the language laboratory because it is air-conditioned and more comfortable, and it is easier to work with the computers.

In response to the sixth question, as to which of these instruments the subjects dislike most, the following information has emerged:

GRAPH 5

Thirteen (13) subjects dislike compositions because they have bad orthography, their grammar and syntax are poor; the use of the dictionary is required to a large extent; and their vocabularies are not extensive.

Fifty (50) subjects dislike oral exams because they consider their pronunciation to be very bad; grammar is weak; they do not have enough time to think; they have a shortage of vocabulary; and they have to memorize too much.

Thirteen (13) subjects dislike written exams because they are required to memorize the material, and by doing this they feel they are not learning anything.

Thirty-five (35) subjects dislike role-plays because they are ashamed to stand up in front of an audience; they forget their lines; they have no imagination or creativity to make up their acts; they have bad pronunciation; they have a shortage of vocabulary.

Fourteen (14) subjects dislike written projects because the teacher usually assigns them as homework, and the subjects do not like to work at home; they do not like to investigate; and they are very lazy to do them.

Ten (10) subjects dislike group projects because only a few students work, while the rest sit around chatting and doing nothing

Two subjects did not respond

In response to the seventh question, as to whether the subjects think that there are many failures in their English class, the following information has emerged: most of the subjects stated that there are not many failures among their classmates, however, those, who have failed, have done so because they do not want to make an effort to study and practice English, they do not take the subject seriously until they are on the verge of failure, they do not turn in their homework on time, and they skip class a lot.

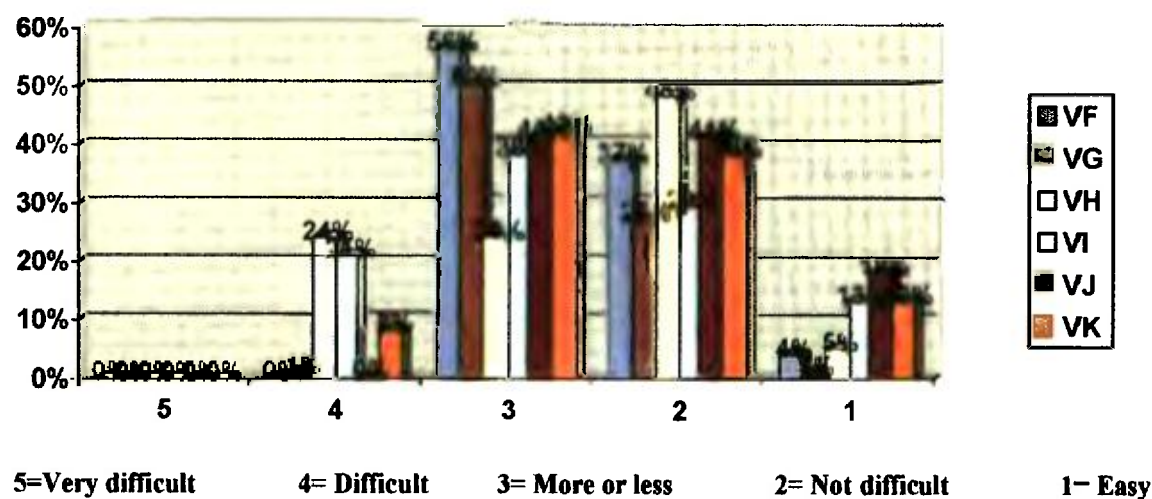
In response to the eighth question, as to what the subjects consider can be done to help avoid failures in the English course, the following information has emerged: some subjects suggest that the methods of instruction should be changed. However, most importantly, the students should make a greater effort and dedicate more time and seriousness to the course, they should show more interest toward the subject and making better grades

In response to the ninth question, as to how difficult the subjects consider the English course, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 3

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VF	27	0	0%	0	0%	15	56%	10	37%	1	4%
VG	26	0	0%	3	1%	13	50%	7	27%	3	1%
VH	21	0	0%	5	24%	5	24%	10	48%	1	5%
VI	24	0	0%	5	21%	9	38%	7	29%	3	13%

VJ	17	0	0%	0	0%	7	41%	7	41%	3	18%
VK	24	0	0%	2	8%	10	42%	9	38%	3	13%
Total	139	0	0%	15	9%	54	42%	50	37%	14	9%

GRAPH 6

The average number of points (average grade of difficulty of the English course) is 2.41, which implies that the subjects perceive the English course as “not difficult”.

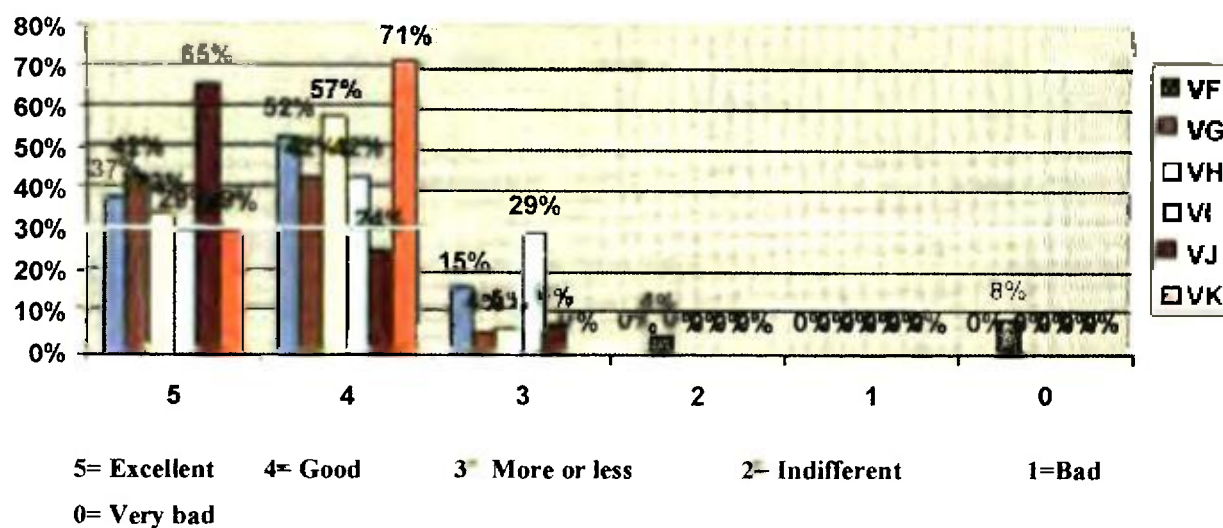
Some of the explanations offered by the subjects were as follows: one subject stated that most of the students can master the English language a little bit. Some stated that English is not difficult, it only needs to be dedicated a little more effort. Others stated that time and attention should be paid during class; practice is needed, and interest. According to one subject, responsibility is an important factor in learning anything at all. Another subject stated that in our reality, English is important. Some subjects stated that there are some structures of the language that are harder than others, but in general, English is not a hard subject. One subject stated that the degree of difficulty depends on the intellectual capacity of the student.

In response to the tenth question, as to how the subjects perceive the attitude of the teacher towards them, the following information emerged:

TABLE 4

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VF	27	10	37%	14	4	4	15%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VG	26	11	42%	11	1	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%	2	8%
VH	21	7	33%	12	1	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VI	24	7	29%	10	7	7	29%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VJ	17	11	65%	4	1	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VK	24	7	29%	17	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	139	53	39%	63	48%	14	10%	1	.7%	0	0%	0	2%

GRAPH 8



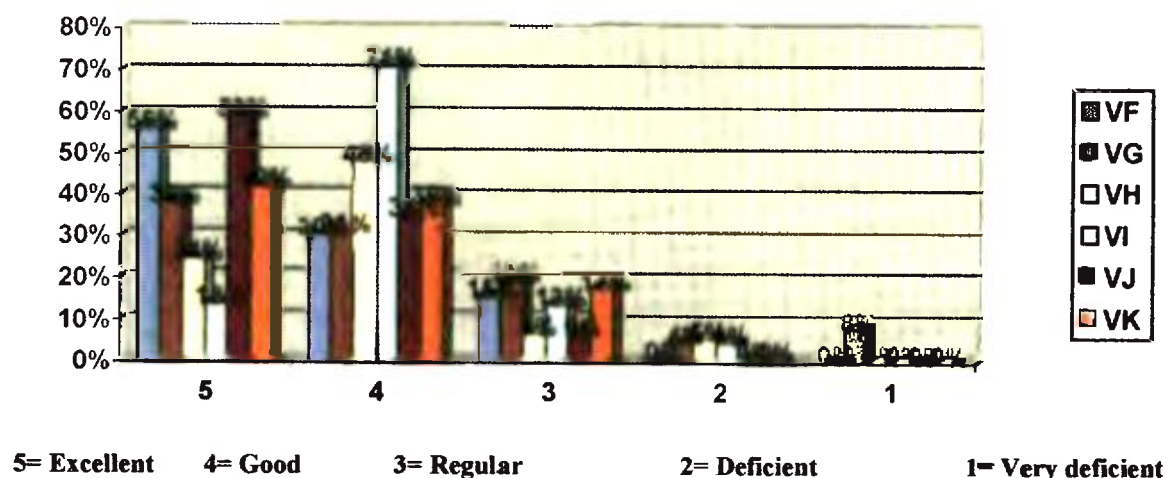
The average number of points (average perception of the attitude of the teacher towards the students) is 4.03, which implies that the subjects perceive the teacher's attitude as good.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: some subjects stated that the teacher is very patient and understanding. Many subjects stated that the teacher is friendly, he/she treats all students equally; he/she is well-prepared and just; and he/she is easy to confide in. However, there are those subjects who claim that the teacher scolds and yells a lot at them, he/she is aggressive sometimes and impatient.

In response to the eleventh question, as to how the subjects perceive the teacher's preparation in instructional methodology of the English language, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 5

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VF	27	15	56%	8	30%	4	15%	0	0%	0	0%
VG	26	10	38%	8	31%	5	19%	1	4%	2	8%
VH	21	5	24%	10	48%	2	6%	1	5%	0	0%
VI	24	3	13%	17	71%	3	13%	1	4%	0	0%
VJ	17	10	59%	6	35%	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%
VK	24	10	42%	9	38%	4	17%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	139	53	39%	58	42%	19	13%	3	2%	2	1%

GRAPH 9

The average number of points (average perception of the teacher's instructional methodology of the English language) is 4.02, which implies that the subjects perceive the teachers' methodological preparation as good.

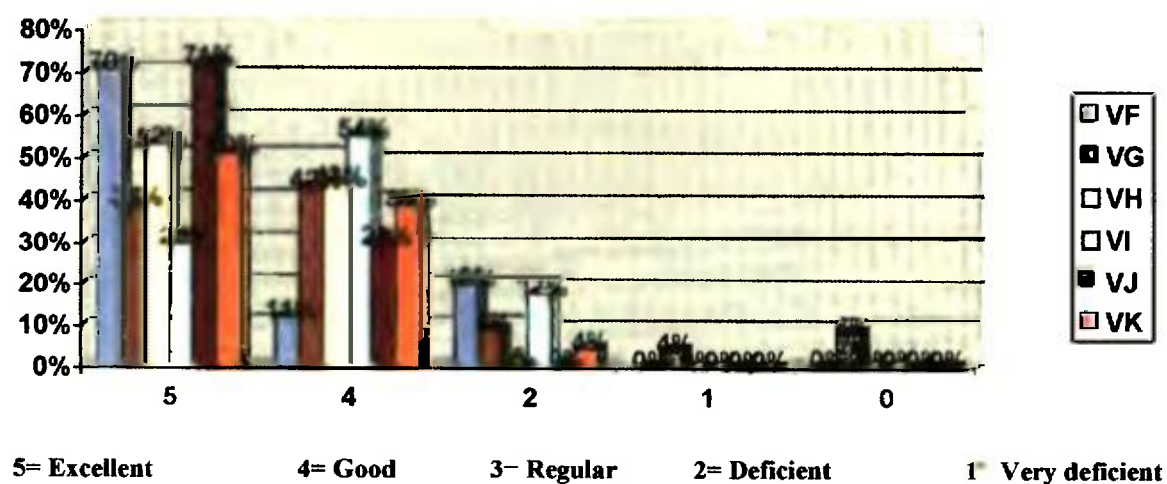
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: one subject stated that the teacher instructs them correctly. Some subjects stated that the teacher helps students when they do not understand, and has the patience to instruct them. One subject stated that the teacher uses different methods to learn English. Another stated that the teacher instructs them differently from other English teachers they have had in the past. Another subject stated that the teacher has an answer for all the questions related to the class, and the students understand him/her. On the other hand, some subjects stated that the teacher, at times, makes it hard for the students to understand; they claim that sometimes it seems that he/she is not sure of what he/she is talking about.

In response to the twelfth question, as to how the subjects perceive the teacher's mastery of the English language, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 6

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VF	27	19	70%	3	11%	5	19%	0	0%	0	0%
VG	26	10	38%	11	42%	2	8%	1	4%	2	8%
VH	21	11	52%	9	43%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VI	24	7	29%	13	54%	4	17%	0	0%	0	0%
VJ	17	12	71%	5	29%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VK	24	12	50%	9	38%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	139	71	57%	50	36%	12	8%	1	.07%	2	1%

GRAPH 9



The average number of points (average perception of the teacher's mastery of the English language) is 4.27, which implies that the subjects perceive the teacher's mastery of the English language as good.

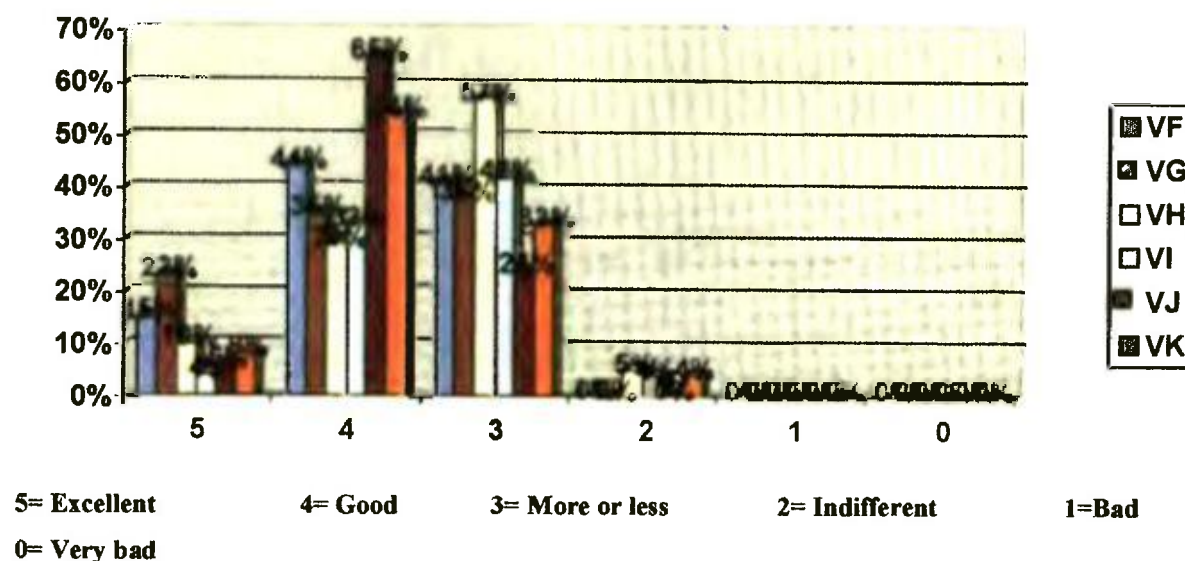
Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: some subjects claim that they have problems, at times, understanding the teacher's pronunciation. However, others stated that the teacher speaks and writes English well. Some claim to "believe" that the teacher masters English, however, they are not sure because they do not speak or understand the language themselves. Others stated that the teacher seems to express him/herself well. One subject stated that she/he likes the way the teacher expresses him/herself in English, and is looking forward to learning a lot. Another stated that even though the teacher seems to make mistakes sometimes, he/she seems to do well most of the time, "no one is perfect".

In response to the thirteenth question, as to how the subjects perceive the attitudes of their classmates towards the teacher, the following information has emerged:

TABLE 7

Group	N°	5		4		3		2		1		0	
		N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
VF	27	4	15%	12	44%	11	41%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VG	26	6	23%	9	35%	10	38%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VH	21	2	10%	6	29%	12	57%	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%
VI	24	1	4%	8	33%	10	42%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
VJ	17	1	6%	11	65%	4	24%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VK	24	2	8%	13	54%	8	33%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	139	16	11%	59	43%	55	39%	3	2%	0	0%	0	0%

GRAPH 10



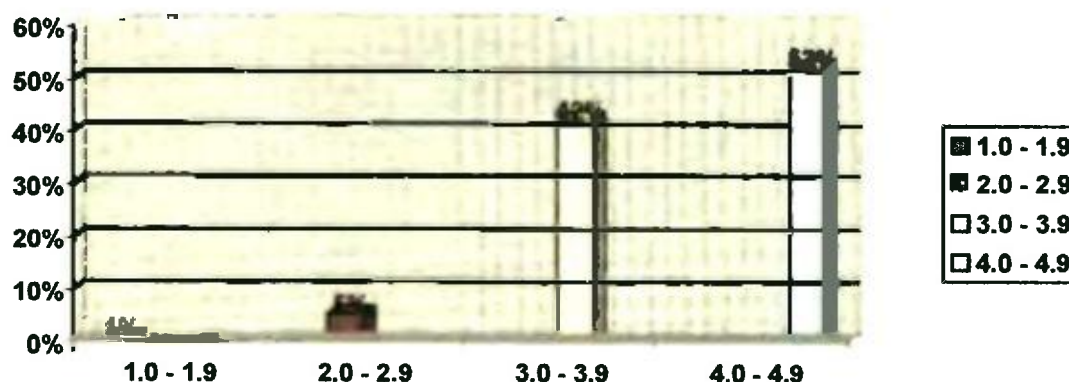
The average number of points (average perception of the classmates towards the teacher) is 3.50, which implies that the subjects perceive their classmates attitude towards the teacher as “regular” or somewhat positive.

Some of the justifications offered by the subjects were as follows: some subjects claim that there are students who do not like the teacher’s personality, and that is why they do not pay attention in class, and do not understand when it is time to be evaluate. Others claim that their classmates skil the English class because they do not like the teacher. Some claim that their classmates respect the teacher, and try as much as possible to behave. Others claim that their classmates d not pay attention to the teacher because they find his/her class boring. One subject stated that his/her classmates put up with the teacher because they have to, but they really do not care much for him/her or his/her classes. Nevertheless, the vast majority claim that their classmates know when to behave themselves, and like their teacher, even though they do not take the English subject very seriously.

In response to the fourteenth question, as to what the subjects suggest the teacher should do to help avoid failures in the English subject, the following information has emerged: some subjects suggest that the teacher should motivate the students to show more interest in the course, for this subject is just as important as all the others, and it is a requirement to get any job after they have graduated from high school. One subject suggests that more drama should be used, and less examinations. Another suggests that the teacher should make them feel that they are good, so that they can feel motivated to work willingly. Some subjects claim that the teacher should explain better. Others suggest that the teacher should engage in more dialogue with the students who do not like English, to negotiate some way to get them to work harder and dedicate more time and effort to the course. Others suggest that the teacher should be clearer in his/her explanations. One subject suggested that the teacher should be stricter with the students who do not show interest in his/her class.

In response to the fifteenth question, as to what was the average final grade of the subjects in the last bimester (s), the following information emerged:

GRAPH 11



According to the data, 6% of the subjects of the Science tract on the afternoon schedule have failing grades (1.0 – 2.9); however, 42% of the subjects have borderline passing grades (3.0 – 3.9), while 52% of the subjects have relatively high grades (4.0 – 4.9). Two subjects did not respond to the question.

DELIMITATIONS

The study herein is survey research. It was undertaken in response to the requirements of the research methodology course of the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Masters Program of the Universidad de Panamá. Although it was not possible to control all of the extraneous variables that may have had an impact on the results of this research, efforts were made to control the most important variables in such a way that these variables would not affect negatively the validity of the study. Furthermore, the limitations of time and funds to conduct this research must also be recognized. Due to the nature of this research topic and the environment in which the study was conducted, a purposive sample was employed to obtain the data needed to respond to the research question. The results of this research will not be generalized to other populations or environments. Nevertheless, it is believed that this research is valid and makes a contribution to knowledge in the area of English language instruction in secondary schools of the Republic of Panama.

CONCLUSIONS

In response to the research question as to what differences there are in the failure rates in the English subject among 5th level (11th grade) student of the Commerce, Letters, and Science tracts of the Instituto Urracá, and the causes for these failure, the following conclusions have emerged:

First of all, the data collected and analyzed led to the conclusion that the students of the V year (11th grade) of the Instituto Urracá do not find the English subject to be of any great importance; even though, most of them recognize that English is a professional requirement, personally they do not care for this subject, and this affects their grades, given the fact that because they find this subject unimportant, they do not want to dedicate time or effort to studying or practicing anything related to the English language.

Negative attitudes on the part of the students towards the teacher, was another explanation for failures and low grades in the English subject, however, this explanation was discarded when the data revealed that the students have positive attitudes towards their teacher, and that, furthermore, they feel comfortable with their teacher.

It was interesting to discover that the instrument most used by all of the English teachers to evaluate their students' performance in the subject is the written exam which, in reality, is known to be an instrument that focuses, in the case of language instruction on grammatical structures, syntactical structures, and vocabulary, and not on the development of communication skills, which is supposed to be the main goal of this subject. Furthermore, the students prefer this instrument because they can make use of memorization, which is characteristic of the traditional instructional method such as the Grammar-Translation Method, and it is easier for them to memorize than it is to make use of analysis and comprehension.

In addition to this, the data revealed that students dislike any activity that involves oral communication in the English language, or any activity that involves analysis, comprehension or reasoning. The researcher has concluded that this is due to the fact that students do not want to make any effort to learn this language; they are very lazy, and they are accustomed to the behaviorist form of learning, which involves more memorization, and no development of cognitive or metacognitive skills. Furthermore, this situation is not only characteristic of learning languages, it is also perceived in all other subjects taken by the students at this and every other level. However, the school system in general is to be blamed for this situation, given the fact that much of the methodology employed in instruction and in the design of curricula is still behaviorist oriented, even though, Constructivism and non-traditional methodologies have been suggested by the educational authorities.

The data also revealed that the students do not consider the English subject to be difficult. As a matter of fact, it was revealed that many students find the subject to be easy. However, when the data is carefully analyzed, it reveals that, just as in the case of other subjects, those students who study and make good grades find the subject easy; while those students who do not study and make bad grades find it difficult. It is also important to add that most of the students, in general, are only interested in passing the subject no matter what grade they make; very few students are interested in learning the English language or making fairly high grades because of personal or professional interest. However, as stated before, this is the case in all other subjects, and not only English.

The teacher's preparation in methodology of instruction was also put forth as a possible explanation for the failures of students in the English subject; however, this possibility has been discarded, given that the data revealed that the students find that their teacher is well-prepared methodologically to teach them the English language. However, there was an observation made that may invalidate this conclusion, which is the possibility of the students not being able to distinguish between a methodologically well-prepared teacher, and one who is not well-prepared.

The students may assume that, because the teacher has been hired to teach in the school by the educational authorities, he/she must be well-prepared. In reality, the students are not able to make a judgement of whether or not the teacher is well-prepared. Some students may not even have a clear concept of what methodology of instruction means, which makes it imperative for someone with enough professional and educational experience to make this judgement.

A similar situation occurs when the students were asked if their teacher has mastered the English language. The data revealed that the students found that their teacher masters the English language "perfectly"; however, when asked why they believe this, the vast majority stated their answers as "assumptions". Now, this is an important

point to ascertaining whether the teacher's mastery of the English language is related to the students' failures in this subject or the fact that they can not communicate at all in English at the end of the year, for this it is obvious that the students do not know the difference between a person who has mastered the English language, and a person who has not, and the greatest reason for this is that the students themselves do not know the language, so it is impossible for them to make an accurate judgement. However, the data reveals that if the teacher uses L1 (Spanish) to explain L2 (English), this makes the students assume that the teacher has mastered L2 perfectly; and the more the teacher uses L1, the better the students like the teacher, the subject, methodology of instruction, and the higher is their opinion on the teacher's mastery of the target language.

Not surprisingly, the impact of the students' behavior on their grades in the English subject, was also found to be related to their performance in the subject. The data revealed that the less the students are interested in any given subject, the less they behave, pay attention during class, study, and deliver their homework on time. The data, in general, revealed that the students do not take the English subject seriously, so they do not behave during class or take their grades in this subject seriously. Most of the students are only worried about making borderline passing grades, which are between 3.0 – 3.9. Nevertheless, there are, as in most cases in all subjects, those students who take more pride in learning about the subject and making good grades

The data revealed that the tract with the most failing students in the English subject is the Commerce tract (morning and afternoon schedule), with 30% failures; followed by the Science tract (morning and afternoon schedule) with 9% failures; and the Letters tract with 0% failures

The data revealed that the reason the commerce tract has the highest rate of failure is because the students of this tract are the least interested in the subject; while the Letters and Science tracts have the students who take the most pride in making fairly good or, at least, passing grades in this subject. However, it is also important to add that a similar

situation occurs in all the other subjects; the Commerce tract seems to be the tract lowest in academic performance.

An interesting observation was also revealed in the data, and that is that the teachers, when asked what tract they prefer to instruct, each and every one of them responded that they prefer to work with the Science tract; and most of the teachers stated that this is so because the students of this tract show more interest in the subject, are easier to work with, and are more critical in their thinking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After analyzing the data collected, and arriving at the conclusions of this research, regarding the differences in the failure rates in the English subject among V year (11th grade) students of the Commerce, Letters, and Science tracts of the Instituto Urracá, and the causes for these failures, the following recommendations are made:

A correlation study is suggested by tract to determine what relationship there is between failure rate in the English subject and failure rate in all the other subjects.

A correlation study is suggested between the rate of failures in all subjects among all three tracts of the Instituto Urracá, to identify patterns, and the possible causes for these rates of failure.

A more systematic supervision on the part of English language specialists of the Ministerio de Educación or the Universidad de Panamá is recommended to determine whether or not the teachers are doing a satisfactory job of teaching the English language; and whether the teacher is competent in terms of pedagogy and language skills.

This research revealed that the students are not able evaluators of teacher performance. Therefore, while a systematic and complete evaluation of the English teachers is recommended, student opinion should not play a role in this evaluation.

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**APPENDIX
INSTRUMENTS**

CUESTIONARIO PARA ESTUDIANTES

El siguiente cuestionario fue diseñado con el propósito de solicitar información referente a la cantidad de fracasos en la materia Inglés entre los estudiantes de 5to año del Instituto Urracá. Toda información proveída será completamente confidencial; por ello, NO escriba su nombre en la hoja. Gracias por su cooperación.

1. ¿En qué área de bachillerato estudias?

_____ Ciencias

_____ Letras

_____ Comercio

2. ¿Te agrada la materia Inglés? En la siguiente escala, escoge el número que mas se acerque a tu respuesta.

5	4	3	2	1	0
Me gusta mucho	me agrada	mas o menos	me da igual	no me gusta	lo detesto

¿Porqué? _____

3. ¿Te agrada tu profesor? Escoge el número que mas se asemeje a tu respuesta.

5	4	3	2	1	0
Me agrada mucho	me agrada	mas o menos	me da igual	no me gusta	lo detesto

¿Porqué? _____

4. ¿Cómo han sido evaluados los temas en esta materia? Selecciona las actividades o técnicas evaluativas mas utilizadas. Enumere de 1 a 7, siendo 7 la menos importante.

- _____ Composiciones
- _____ Exámenes orales
- _____ Exámenes escritos
- _____ Role-plays (dramas)
- _____ Trabajos escritos
- _____ Trabajos en grupos
- _____ Otros _____

5. ¿Cuál de estos te agrada mas, y por qué?

6. ¿Cuál de estos te agrada menos, y por qué?

7. ¿Existen muchos fracasos en tu grupo? ¿Por qué piensas tu que hay tantos fracasos en Inglés?

CUESTIONARIO PARA PROFESORES DE INGLÉS

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1. ¿A qué bachiller le dicta usted la materia Inglés?
☐ Ciencias ☐ Letras ☐ Comercio

2. ¿Cuántos años tiene usted enseñando a éste bachiller en el Instituto Urracá?

3. ¿Le ha dictado cátedra a algún otro bachillerato?

☐ Sí ☐ No

Especifique: _____

4. ¿Tiene usted preferencia por instruir alguno de estos bachilleratos?

☐ Sí ☐ No

Especifique: _____

5. ¿Qué tipo de temas trata usted en el bachillerato que le corresponde?

6. ¿Cómo percibe usted la actitud de sus estudiantes hacia la materia Inglés?

7. ¿Cómo percibe usted la actitud de sus estudiantes hacia usted?

8. Cuál es el instrumento que más utiliza usted para evaluar a sus estudiantes en la materia?

- ☐ Composiciones
☐ Exámenes orales
☐ Exámenes escritos
☐ Role-plays
☐ Trabajos escritos
☐ Trabajos en grupo
☐ Otros _____

9. ¿Existen muchos fracasos entre estudiantes a quien les dicta usted cátedra?

☐ Sí ☐ No

10. ¿En su opinión, cómo perciben los estudiantes la materia Inglés en términos de dificultad?

11. ¿Cuál ha sido su preparación académica que le ha permitido dictar esta materia?

- ☐ Licenciatura en Inglés
☐ Post-grado en Inglés
☐ Maestría en Inglés
☐ Otros _____

Especifique: _____

8. ¿Que piensas que podria nacerse para que los estudiantes no iracasen tanto?

9. En una escala de dificultad, ¿dónde ubicarias la materia Ingles?

5 4 3 2 1
Muy difiail difiail mas o menos poco difiail facil
¿Porqué? _____

10. ¿Cómo olasificarias la actitud de tu profesor?

5 4 3 2 1 0
excelente buena regular indiferente mala muy mala
¿Porqué? _____

11. ¿Cómo evaluarías la preparacion en metodologia de ensefianza de tu profesor para ensefanzar el idioma Ingles?

5 4 3 2 1
Excelente buena regular deficiente muy deficiente
¿Porqué? _____

12. ¿Piensas que tu profesor domina bien el Inglés?

5 4 3 2 1
Excelente buena regular deficiente muy deficiente
Explica: _____

13. ¿Cómo clasificarías las actitudes de tus compañeros hacia el profesor?

5 4 3 2 1 0
Excelente bueno regular indiferente mala muy mala
¿Porqué? _____

14. ¿Qué piensas que debe hacer el profesor para motivar a los estudiantes a mejorar en sus notas?

15. ¿Cuál fue su promedio en Inglés en el ultimo bimestre?

- a. de 1.0 - 1.9 _____
- b. de 2.0 - 2.9 _____
- c. de 3.0 - 3.9 _____
- d. de 4.0 - 4.9 _____

12. ¿Cómo y con quien práctica usted el lenguaje Inglés?

_____ en casa.

_____ con colegas

_____ con estudiantes.

_____ Otros

Explique:

13. ¿Considera usted que sus estudiantes puede comunicar en el idioma Inglés?

_____ Excelentemente

_____ Bien

_____ Regular

_____ Deficiente

_____ Muy deficiente

Explique:

14. ¿Por qué piensa usted que hay tantos fracasos en la materia Inglés?

15. ¿Qué considera usted que se puede hacer para motivar a los estudiantes a mejorar sus notas en la materia Inglés?
